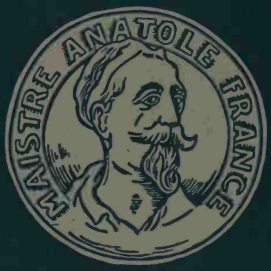
MAISTRE ANATOLE FRANCE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MONSIEUR BERGERET IN PARIS

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BY

ANATOLE FRANCE

A TRANSLATION BY

B. DRILLIEN

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CHAPTER I

ONSIEUR BERGERET was seated at table taking his frugal evening meal. Riquet lay at his feet on a tapestry cushion. Riquet had a religious soul; he rendered divine honours to mankind. He regarded his master as very good and very great. But it was chiefly when he saw him at table that he realized the sovereign greatness and goodness of Monsieur Bergeret.

If, to Riquet, all things pertaining to food were precious and impressive, those pertaining to the food of man were sacred. He venerated the dining-room as a temple, the table as an altar. During meals he kept his place at his master's feet, in silence and immobility.

"It's a spring chicken," said old Angélique as she placed the dish upon the table.

"Good. Be kind enough to carve it, then," said

Monsieur Bergeret, who was a poor hand with weapons and quite hopeless as a carver.

"Willingly," said Angélique, "but carving isn't woman's work, it's the gentlemen who ought to carve poultry."

"I don't know how to carve."

"Monsieur ought to know."

This dialogue was by no means new. Angélique and her master exchanged similar remarks every time that game or poultry came to the table. It was not flippantly, it was certainly not to save herself trouble, that the old servant persisted in offering her master the carving-knife as a token of the respect which was due to him. In the peasant class from which she had sprung and also in the little middle-class households where she had been in service, it was a tradition that it was the master's duty to carve. The faithful old soul's respect for tradition was profound. She did not think it right that Monsieur Bergeret should fall short of it, that he should delegate to her the performance of so authoritative a function, that he should fail to carve at his own table, since he was not grand enough to employ a butler to do it for him, like the Brécés, the Bonmonts and other such folk in town or country. She knew the obligations which honour imposes on a citizen who dines at home,

and she never failed to impress them upon Monsieur Bergeret.

"The knife has just been sharpened; Monsieur can easily cut off a wing. It's not difficult to find the joint when the chicken is tender."

"Angélique, be so good as to carve this chicken."

Reluctantly she obeyed, and, slightly crestfallen, she carved the chicken on a corner of the sideboard. With regard to human food she had ideas which were more accurate but no less respectful than those of Riquet.

Meanwhile Monsieur Bergeret revolved within himself the reasons of the prejudice which had induced the worthy woman to believe that the right of wielding the carving-knife belonged to the master of the house alone. He did not look to find them in any gracious and kindly feeling on the man's part that he should reserve to himself a tedious and unattractive task. It is, as a matter of fact, to be observed that throughout the ages the more laborious and distasteful household tasks have, by the common consent of all nations, been assigned to women. On the contrary, he attributed the tradition cherished by old Angélique to the ancient idea that the flesh of animals, prepared for the sustenance of man, is a thing so precious that the master alone may and

should apportion and distribute it. And he called to mind the godlike swine-herd Eumæus receiving Ulysses in his pig-sty. He did not recognize him, but honoured him as a guest sent by Zeus:

"Eumæus rose to divide the portions among his guests, for he had an equitable mind. He made seven portions, whereof he dedicated one to the Nymphs and to Hermes, son of Maia, and of the rest he gave one portion to each of his table companions; but to honour his guest Ulysses he offered him the whole chine of the pig. And the subtle Ulysses rejoiced thereat and said to Eumæus: 'Eumæus, mayst thou remain for ever dear to our father Zeus for that thou hast honoured me, such as I am, by giving me the best portion!' "

Thus Monsieur Bergeret, when in the company of his old servant, daughter of Mother Earth, felt himself carried back to the days of antiquity.

"Will Monsieur help himself to a little more?"

But he had not, like the divine Ulysses and the kings of Homer, an heroic appetite; and, as he ate, he read his paper, which lay open upon the table. This was another habit of which the servant did not approve.

"Would you like a bit of chicken, Riquet?" asked Monsieur Bergeret. "It is very good."

Riquet made no reply. He never asked for food as long as he lay under the table. However good the dishes might smell he did not claim his share of them, and, what is more, he dared not touch anything that was offered him. He refused to eat in a human dining-room. Monsieur Bergeret, an affectionate and kindly man, would have liked to share his meals with his comrade. At first he had tried to smuggle down to him a few little scraps. He had spoken to him gently, but not without that arrogance which so often accompanies beneficence. He had said:

"Lazarus, receive the crumbs of the good rich man, since for you, at all events, I am the good rich man."

But Riquet had always refused. The majesty of the place over-awed him; and perhaps in his former condition he had received a lesson that taught him to respect the master's food.

One day Monsieur Bergeret had been more pressing than usual. For a long while he had held a delicious piece of meat under his friend's nose. Riquet had averted his head, and, emerging from beneath the table-cloth, had gazed at his master with his beautiful, humble eyes, full of gentleness and

reproach; eyes that said: "Master, wherefore dost thou tempt me?"

And with drooping tail and crouching legs he had dragged himself upon his belly as a sign of humility, and had gone dejectedly to the door, where he sat upon his haunches. He had remained there throughout the meal. And Monsieur Bergeret had marvelled at the saintly patience of his little black friend.

He knew, then, what Riquet's feelings were, and that is why he did not insist on this occasion. Moreover, he knew that Riquet, after the dinner at which he was a reverential spectator, would presently go to the kitchen and greedily devour his own mess under the kitchen sink, snuffling and blowing, entirely at his ease. His mind at rest on this point, he resumed the thread of his thoughts.

"The heroes," he reflected, "used to make a great business of eating and drinking. Homer does not forget to tell us that in the palace of the fair-haired Menelaus, Eteonteus, the son of Boëthus, was wont to carve the meats and distribute the portions. A king was worthy of praise when, at his table, every man received his due portion of the roasted ox. Menelaus knew the customs of his times. With the aid of her servants the white-armed Helen saw to the cooking and the great

Eteonteus carved the meats. The pride of so noble a function still shines upon the smooth faces of our butlers and *maîtres d'hôtel.* We are deep-rooted in the past. But I am not a hungry man: I am only a small eater, and Angélique Borniche, primitive woman that she is, makes that too a grievance against me. She would think far more of me had I the appetite of a son of Atreus or a Bourbon."

Monsieur Bergeret had just reached this stage in his reflections when Riquet got up from his cushion and ran barking to the door.

This action was remarkable because it was unusual. Riquet never left his cushion until his master rose from table. He had been barking for some moments when old Angélique, putting a bewildered face in at the door, announced that "those young ladies" had arrived.

Monsieur Bergeret understood her to allude to his sister Zoe and his daughter Pauline, whom he had not expected so soon. He knew that his sister Zoe was brusque and sudden in her actions. He rose from the table; but Riquet, at the sound of footsteps, which were now heard in the passage outside, uttered terrible cries of warning; his aboriginal caution, unconquered by a liberal education, leading him to believe that every stranger must of necessity be an enemy. He scented a

great danger, a hideous invasion of the dining-room, with the menace of ruin and desolation.

Pauline flung her arms around her father's neck. Napkin in hand, he kissed her, and then stood back to gaze at this young girl, a mysterious being, like all young girls, whom, after a year's absence, he hardly recognized. She was at once very near and almost a stranger to him. She was his by virtue of the obscure sources of life, but she eluded him in the dazzling energy of youth.

"How do you do, papa?"

Her very voice had changed; it was lower and less uneven.

"How you have grown, my child!"

He thought her pretty, with her dainty nose, intelligent eyes and quizzical mouth. But this feeling was at once marred by the reflection that there is little peace in this world of ours, and that young people, seeking for happiness, are entering upon a difficult and uncertain enterprise.

He gave Zoe a hasty kiss upon either cheek.

"You have not altered, Zoe, my dear. I did not expect you to-day, but I am very glad to see you both again."

Riquet could not understand why his master gave so warm a welcome to strange folk. Had he violently driven them forth, he could have understood. However, he was used to not understand-

ing all the ways of men. Suffering Monsieur Bergeret to do as he would, he continued to perform his duty, barking furiously to scare the evil-doers. Then, from the depths of his throat, he drew growls of hatred and anger; and a frightful contraction of his lips uncovered his white teeth. Backing away from his enemies, he hurled threats at them.

"Is that your dog, papa?"

"You were to have come on Saturday," remarked Monsieur Bergeret.

"Didn't you get my letter?" inquired Zoe.

"Yes," replied Monsieur Bergeret.

"No, I mean the other one."

"I received only one."

"One cannot hear oneself speak here!"

It is true that Riquet was barking at the top of his voice.

"Your sideboard is dusty," remarked Zoe, putting her muff on it. "Doesn't your servant ever do any dusting?"

Riquet could not bear any one to lay hold of the sideboard like that. Either he had conceived a special aversion for Mademoiselle Zoe or he judged her the more important of the two, for it was to her that he addressed his loudest barks and growls. When he saw her place a hand upon the receptacle in which the human nutriment was stored he barked

so shrilly that the glasses upon the table rang again. Mademoiselle Zoe, turning upon him suddenly, inquired ironically:

"Are you going to eat me up?"

Riquet fled in terror.

"Is your dog vicious, papa?"

"No, he is intelligent; he isn't vicious."

"I don't think he's particularly intelligent," said Zoe.

"Yes, he is," said Monsieur Bergeret. "He does not understand all our ideas; but we don't understand all his. No one can enter into the mind of another."

"You, Lucien, are no judge of persons," said Zoe.

Monsieur Bergeret turned to Pauline.

"Come, let me have a look at you. I can hardly recognise you."

A bright idea struck Riquet. He made up his mind to go to the kitchen, to the kindly Angélique, and to warn her, if possible, of the disturbance taking place in the dining-room. She was his last hope for the restoration of order and the expulsion of the intruders.

"What have you done with Father's portrait?" inquired Mademoiselle Zoe.

"Sit down and have something to eat," said

Monsieur Bergeret. "There is some chicken and various other things."

"Papa, is it really true that we are going to live in Paris?"

"Next month, my child. Are you glad?"

"Yes, but I should be just as happy in the country if I could have a garden."

She stopped eating her chicken and said:

"I do admire you, papa. I'm proud of you. You are a great man."

"That is what my little dog Riquet thinks too," replied Monsieur Bergeret.

CHAPTER II

NDER the supervision of Mademoiselle Zoe, the professor's furniture was packed and taken to the railway station.

During the days of the removal Riquet roamed sadly through the devastated rooms. He regarded Zoe and Pauline with suspicion, as their arrival had been closely followed by the complete upheaval of his formerly peaceful home. The tears of old Angélique, who wept all day long in her kitchen, increased his depression. His most cherished habits were set at naught; the strange, ill-clad, fierce and insulting men troubled his repose; they even went so far as to enter the kitchen and kick away his plate of food and bowl of fresh water. Chairs were taken from him as soon as he lay upon them, and carpets were abruptly dragged from beneath his persecuted body, so that in his own home he no longer knew where to lay his head.

To his honour be it said that at first he had sought to resist. When the water-tank was re-

moved he had barked furiously at the enemy, but no one heeded the alarm. No one gave him any encouragement; nay, he was, indeed, actually opposed. "Be quiet," rapped out Mademoiselle Zoe, and Pauline had added, "Riquet, you are perfectly absurd!"

Thenceforth he decided not to waste his time in giving warnings that fell on deaf ears or to labour unaided for the common good, and he grieved silently over the ruined house, and wandered from room to room vainly seeking a little peace. When the pantechnicon men entered the room in which he had taken refuge he would prudently hide beneath some table or sideboard which had not yet been taken away. But this precaution was more harmful than helpful to him, for presently the piece of furniture tottered above him, rose, and fell again, creaking ominously and threatening to crush him. With bristling coat and haggard features he took to his heels only to seek another place of refuge as precarious as the last.

But these material inconveniences, nay, these perils, were trifling matters in comparison with the pain that filled his heart. It was his *moral,* so to speak, that was most affected.

To him the articles of furniture were not inanimate objects but living and kindly beings, favourable *genii* whose departure was a presage of

dire misfortune. Dishes and frying-pans, saucepans and sugar-basins, all the divinities of the kitchen; arm-chairs, carpets, cushions, all the fetishes of the fireside, his Lares and his household gods, had disappeared. He did not believe that so great a disaster could ever be made good, and his little soul grieved over it to the very limit of its capacity. Happily, like the human soul, it was easily distracted and quick to forget its woes. During the lengthy absences of the thirsty removers, when old Angélique's broom stirred up the ancient dust upon the floor, Riquet scented the smell of mice, or watched a scurrying spider, and his fickle fancy was diverted awhile; but he soon relapsed into melancholy.

On the day of departure, seeing that matters were growing worse from hour to hour, he was utterly miserable. It seemed to him a peculiarly ominous thing that they should thrust the linen into dismal-looking chests. Pauline was packing her own boxes with joyful eagerness. He turned from her as though she were doing an evil thing, and huddled against the wall. "The worst has come," he thought. "This is the end of all things!"

Whether he believed that things ceased to exist when he saw them no longer, or whether he was only anxious to avoid a painful spectacle, he was careful not to look in Pauline's direction. As she

went to and fro she chanced to notice Riquet's attitude, and its melancholy struck her as comical. Laughing, she called him: "Here, Riquet, here!" But he would neither stir from his corner nor turn his head. He hadn't at that moment the heart to caress his young mistress, and a secret instinct, a kind of foreboding, warned him not to go too near to the gaping trunk. Pauline called him several times, and as he did not respond she went over to him and picked him up in her arms.

"How miserable we are!" she said. "How much to be pitied!"

Her tone was ironical; Riquet did not understand irony. He lay motionless and dejected in her arms, feigning to see nothing, to hear nothing.

"Look at me, Riquet!" she demanded. Three times she bade him look at her, but in vain. Then, simulating violent anger, she threw him into the trunk, crying, "In you go, stupid!" and banged the lid on him. At that moment her aunt called her, and she went out of the room, leaving Riquet in the trunk.

He felt exceedingly uneasy, for it never entered his head that Pauline had put him there for fun, and merely to tease him. Judging that his position was quite bad enough already, he endeavoured not to aggravate it by thoughtless behaviour. For

some moments, therefore, he remained motionless without even drawing a breath. Then, feeling that no fresh disaster threatened him, he thought he had better explore his gloomy prison. He pawed the petticoats and chemises upon which he had been so cruelly precipitated, seeking some outlet by which he might escape. He had been busy for two or three minutes when Monsieur Bergeret, who was getting ready to go out, called him:

"Riquet! Riquet! Here! we're going to the bookshop to say good-bye to Paillot! Here! Where are you?"

Monsieur Bergeret's voice comforted Riquet greatly. He replied to it by a desperate scratching at the wicker sides of the trunk.

"Where is the dog?" inquired Monsieur Bergeret of Pauline, who at that moment returned, carrying a pile of linen.

"In my trunk, papa."

'Why in the trunk?"

"Because I put him there."

Monsieur Bergeret went up to the trunk, and remarked:

"It was thus that the child Comatas, who played upon the flute as he kept his master's goats, was imprisoned in a chest, where he was fed on honey by the bees of the Muses. But not so with you, Riquet; you would have died of hunger in

this trunk, for you are not dear to the immortal Muses."

Having spoken, Monsieur Bergeret freed his little friend, who with wagging tail followed him as far as the hall. Then a thought appeared to strike him. He returned to Pauline's room, ran to her and jumped up against her skirt, and only when he had riotously embraced her as a sign of his adoration did he rejoin his master on the stairs. He would have felt that he was lacking in wisdom and piety had he failed to bestow these tokens of affection on a being whose power had plunged him into the depths of a trunk.

Monsieur Bergeret thought Paillot's shop a dismal, ugly place. Paillot and his assistant were busy "calling over" the list of goods supplied to the Communal School. This task prevented him from prolonging his farewell to the professor. He had never had very much to say for himself and as he grew older he was gradually losing the habit of speech. He was weary of selling books; he saw that it was all over with the trade and was longing for the time to come when he could give up his business and retire to his place in the country, where he always spent his Sundays.

As was his wont, Monsieur Bergeret made for the corner where the old books were kept and took down volume XXXVIII of *The World's Ex-*

plorers. The book opened as usual at pages 212 and 213, and once more he perused these uninspiring lines:

". . . towards a northerly passage. 'It was owing to this check,' said he, 'that we were able to revisit the Sandwich Islands and enrich our voyage by a discovery which, although the last, seems in many respects to be the most important which has yet been made by Europeans in the whole extent of the Pacific Ocean.' The happy anticipations which these words appeared to announce were, unhappily, not realized. . . ."

These lines, which he was reading for the hundredth time, and which reminded him of so many hours of his commonplace and laborious existence which was embellished, nevertheless, by the fruitful labours of the mind; these lines, for whose meaning he had never sought, filled him, on this occasion, with melancholy and discouragement, as though they contained a symbol of the emptiness of all human hopes, an expression of the universal void. He closed the book, which he had opened so often and was never to open again, and dejectedly left the shop.

In the Place Saint-Exupère he cast a last glance at the house of Queen Marguerite. The rays of the setting sun gleamed upon its historic beams, and in the violent contrast of light and shade the

escutcheon of Philippe Tricouillard proudly displayed the outlines of its gorgeous coat of arms, placed there as an eloquent example and a reproach to the barren city.

Having re-entered the empty house, Riquet pawed his master's legs, looking up at him with his beautiful sorrowing eyes, that said: "You, formerly so rich and powerful, have you, O master, become poor? Have you grown powerless? You suffer men clad in filthy rags to invade your study, your bedroom and your dining-room, to fall upon your furniture and drag it out of doors. They drag your deep arm-chair down the stairs, your chair and mine, in which we sat to rest every evening, and often in the morning, side by side. In the clutch of these ragged men I heard it groan, that chair which is so great a fetish and so benevolent a spirit. And you never resisted these invaders. If you have lost all the *genii* that used to fill your house, even to the little divinities, that you used to put on your feet every morning when you got out of bed, those slippers which I used to worry in my play, if you are poor and miserable, O my master, what will become of me?"

"Lucien, we have no time to lose," said Zoe. "The train goes at eight and we have had no dinner. Let us go and dine at the station."

"To-morrow you will be in Paris," said Monsieur Bergeret to Riquet. "Paris is a famous and a generous city. To be honest, however, I must point out that this generosity is not vouchsafed alike to all its inhabitants. On the contrary, it is confined to a very small number of its citizens. But a whole city, a whole nation resides in the few who think more forcefully and more justly than the rest. The others do not count. What we call the spirit of a race attains consciousness only in imperceptible minorities. Minds which are sufficiently free to rid themselves of vulgar terrors and discover for themselves the veiled truths are rare in any place!"

CHAPTER III

PON Monsieur Bergeret's arrival in Paris, with his daughter Pauline and his sister Zoe, he had lodged in a house which was soon to be pulled down, and which he began to like as soon as he knew that he could not remain in it. He was unaware of the fact that in any case he would have left it at the same time. Mademoiselle Bergeret had made up her mind as to that. She had taken these rooms only to give herself time to find better, and was opposed to the spending of any money upon the place.

It was a house in the Rue de Seine, a hundred years old at least. Never beautiful, it had grown uglier with age. The *porte cochère* opened humbly on a damp courtyard between a shoemaker's shop and a carrier's office. Monsieur Bergeret's rooms were on the second floor, and on the same floor lived a picture-restorer through whose open door glimpses could be caught of little unframed canvases set about an earthenware stove, landscapes, old portraits, and an amber-skinned woman asleep

in a dark wood under a green sky. The staircase was fairly well lighted. Cobwebs hung in the corners, and at the turns the wooden stairs were embellished with tiles. Stray lettuce-leaves, dropped from some housewife's string bag, were to be found there of a morning.

Such things had no charm for Monsieur Bergeret, but he could not help feeling sad at the thought that he would become oblivious of these things as he had of so many others which, though they were not of any value, had made up the course of his life.

Every day, when his work was done, he went house-hunting. He thought of living for preference on the left bank of the Seine, where his father had dwelt before him, where it seemed to him one breathed an atmosphere of quiet life and peaceful study. What made his search more difficult was the state of the roads, broken with deep trenches and covered with mounds of earth. There were also the impassable and eternally disfigured quays.

It will, of course, be remembered that, in the year 1899, the surface of Paris underwent a complete upheaval, either because the new conditions of life necessitated the execution of a great number of municipal undertakings, or because the approach of a huge international exhibition gave rise on every side to an exaggerated activity and a sudden ardour

of enterprise. Monsieur Bergeret was grieved to see the town upset, for he did not sufficiently understand the necessity of such a proceeding, but, as he was a wise man, he endeavoured to console himself, to reassure himself by meditation. When he passed along his beautiful Quai Malaquais, so cruelly ravaged by merciless engineers, he pitied the uprooted trees and the banished keepers of book-stalls, and he reflected, not without a certain depth of feeling:

"I have lost my friends, and now all that gave me delight in this city, her peace, her grace and her beauty, her old-time elegance and her noble historical vistas, is being violently swept away. It is always right and fitting, however, that reason should prevail over sentiment. We must not dally with vain regrets for the past, nor commiserate with ourselves over the changes that thrust themselves upon us, since change is the very condition of life. Perhaps these upheavals are necessary; it is needful that this city should lose some of her traditional beauty, so that the lives of the greater number of her inhabitants may become less painful and less hard."

And, in the company of idle errand-boys and indolent police-sergeants, Monsieur Bergeret would watch the navvies digging deep into the soil of the famous quay, and once again he would tell himself:

"Here I see a vision of the city of the future, whose noblest buildings are as yet indicated only by deep excavations, which would suggest, to a shallow mind, that the labourers who are toiling to rear the city which we shall never behold are merely excavating abysmal pits, when in reality they may be laying the foundations of a prosperous home, the abode of joy and peace."

Thus did Monsieur Bergeret, who was a man of goodwill, look with a favouring eye upon the building of the ideal city; but he was much less at home amid the building operations of the real city, seeing that at every step he risked falling, through absence of mind, into a pit.

Nevertheless he continued to go house-hunting, but he did so in a whimsical fashion. Old houses pleased him, in that their stones had for him a tongue. The Rue Gît-le-Cœur had a particular attraction for him, and whenever he saw beside the keystone of a gateway or on a door which had once been flanked by a wrought-iron railing a notice to the effect that there was a flat to let, he would mount the stairs, accompanied by a sordid concierge, in an atmosphere that reeked of countless generations of rats, which was aggravated from floor to floor by the smell of cooking from poverty-stricken kitchens. The workshops of bookbinders or box-makers enriched it at times with the horrible odour

of sour glue, and Monsieur Bergeret would depart filled with sadness and discouragement.

Home again, he would tell his sister and daughter, at the dinner-table, of the unfavourable results of his inquiries; Mademoiselle Zoe would listen calmly to his story. She had made up her mind to seek and to find a house herself. She regarded her brother as a superior person, but as one quite incapable of reasonable ideas concerning the practical affairs of life.

"I went over a flat to-day on the Quai Conti. I don't know what you would think of it. It looks out on a courtyard with a well, some ivy, and a statue of Flora, moss-grown, mutilated, and headless, perpetually weaving a garland of flowers. I also saw a small flat in the Rue de la Chaise. That looks out on a garden with a great lime-tree, one branch of which, when the leaves have grown, would enter my study. There is a big room that Pauline could have; she would make it charming with a few yards of coloured cretonne."

"What about my room?" demanded Mademoiselle Zoe. "You never think of my room. Besides——"

She did not finish her sentence, as she took no particular notice of her brother's reports.

"We may be obliged to move into a new house," said Monsieur Bergeret, for he was a sensible

man accustomed to subject his desires to reason.

"I'm afraid so, papa," said Pauline. "But never mind, we will find you a tree reaching up to your window, I promise you."

She followed her father's investigations with perfect good nature, but without much personal interest, as a young girl undismayed by change, who vaguely feels that her fate is not yet determined, and lives the while in a species of anticipation.

"The new houses are better fitted up than the old ones," continued Monsieur Bergeret, "but I do not like them, perhaps because I am more conscious, in the midst of a luxury that one can measure, of the vulgarity of a straitened life. Not that the mediocrity of my fortune distresses me, even on your account. It is the banal and commonplace that I detest. . . . But you will think me absurd."

"Oh, no, papa."

"What I dislike in new houses is the precise sameness of their arrangement. The structure of the apartment is only too visible from the outside. For a long while dwellers in cities have been accustomed to live one above another, and as your aunt won't hear of a small house in the suburbs I am quite willing to put up with a third or fourth-story flat, and that is precisely why I cannot but regret giving up the idea of an old house. The irregu-

larity of old houses makes the piling of flat upon flat more endurable. When I walk down a new street I find myself thinking that this superposition of households in modern buildings is, in its uniformity, ridiculous. The small dining-rooms perched one above the other with the same little windows and the self-same copper gaselier lighted every evening at exactly the same time; the same tiny kitchens with larders looking on the yard, the same extremely dirty maidservants; the same drawing-rooms, with their pianos one over the other. To my mind, the precision of modern houses reveals the daily functions of the creatures enclosed in them as plainly as though the floors and ceilings were of glass. And all these people who dine one above another, play the piano one above another, and go to bed one above another, in a perfectly symmetrical fashion—when one thinks of it, they offer a spectacle both comical and humiliating."

"The tenants themselves would hardly think so," said Mademoiselle Zoe, who had quite decided to settle in a new house.

"It is true," said Pauline thoughtfully, "it is true, it is comical."

"Of course, here and there, I see rooms that I like," continued Monsieur Bergeret. "But the rent is always too high. And that makes me doubt the

truth of a principle laid down by the admirable Fourier, which assures us that our tastes are so diverse that if only we lived in harmony with one another hovels would be as much in demand as palaces. It is quite true that we do not live in harmony; or we should all possess prehensile tails, so that we could hang suspended from the trees. Fourier has expressly said so. Another man of equal merit, the gentle Prince Kropotkin, has assured us more recently that some day we shall live rent-free in the mansions on the great avenues, for their owners will abandon them when they can no longer procure servants to keep them up. In those days, says the benevolent prince, they will be delighted to hand them over to the worthy women of the working-classes who will not object to a kitchen in the basement. In the meanwhile, the question of a house is both arduous and difficult. Zoe, please come with me to see that suite of rooms on the Quai Conti of which I told you. It is rather dilapidated, having served for thirty years as a chemical warehouse. The landlord won't do any repairs as he expects to let the place as a warehouse. The windows are oval dormer-windows, but from them you see an ivy-covered wall, a moss-grown well and a headless statue of Flora which still seems to smile. Such things are not easily found in Paris."

CHAPTER IV

T is to let," said Mademoiselle Zoe, as they stopped before the gate. "It is to let, but we will not take it. It is too big. Besides——"

"No, we will not take it, but will you look over it? I should be interested to see it again," said Monsieur Bergeret timidly.

They hesitated a moment. It seemed to them that in entering the deep dark vaulted way they were entering the region of the shades.

Scouring the streets in search of a flat, they had chanced to cross the narrow Rue des Grands-Augustins, which has preserved its old-world aspect, and whose greasy pavements are never dry. They remembered that they had passed six years of their childhood in one of the houses in this street. Their father, a professor at the University, had settled there in 1856, after having led for four years a wandering and precarious existence, ceaselessly hunted from town to town by an inimical Minister of Instruction. And, as witnessed the

battered notice-board, the very flat in which Lucien and Zoe had first seen the light of day, and tasted the savour of life, was now to let.

As they passed down the path which led under the massive forefront of the building, they experienced an inexplicable feeling of melancholy and reverence. The damp courtyard was hemmed in by walls which since the minority of Louis XIV had slowly been crumbling in the rains and the fogs rising from the Seine. On the right as they entered was a small building, which served as a porter's lodge. There, on the window-sill, a magpie hopped about in a cage, and in the lodge, behind a flowering plant, a woman sat sewing.

"Is the second floor on the courtyard to let?"

"Yes, do you wish to see it?"

"Yes, we should like to see it."

Key in hand, the concierge led the way. They followed her in silence. The gloomy antiquity of the house caused the memories which the blackened stones evoked for the brother and sister to recede into an unfathomable past. They climbed the stone stairs in a state of sorrowful eagerness, and when the concierge opened the door of the flat they remained motionless upon the landing, afraid to enter the rooms that seemed to be haunted by the host of their childish memories, like so many little ghosts.

"You can go in; the flat is empty."

At first they could find nothing of the past in the wide empty rooms, freshly papered. They were amazed to find that they had become strangers to things which had formerly been so familiar.

"Here is the kitchen," said the concierge, "and here are the dining-room and the drawing-room."

A voice cried from the courtyard:

"M'ame Falempin!"

The concierge looked out of the window, apologized, and grumbling to herself went down the stairs with feeble steps, groaning. Then the brother and sister began to remember. Memories of inimitable hours, of the long days of childhood, began to return to them.

"Here is the dining-room," said Zoe. "The sideboard used to be there, against the wall."

"The mahogany sideboard, 'battered by its long wanderings,' as our father used to say, when he and his family and his furniture were ceaselessly hunted from north to south and from east to west by the Minister of the 2nd of December. It remained here a few years, however, maimed and crippled."

"There is the porcelain stove in its old corner."

"The flue is different."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, Zoe. Ours had a head of Jupiter Tro-

phonius upon it. In those far-off days it was the custom of the stove-makers in the Cour du Dragon to decorate porcelain flues with a head of Jupiter Trophonius."

"Are you sure?"

"Sure. Don't you remember a crowned head with a pointed beard?"

"No."

"Oh, well that is not surprising; you were always indifferent to the shapes of things. You don't look at anything."

"I am more observant than you, my poor Lucien; it is you who never notice things. The other day, when Pauline had waved her hair, you didn't notice it. If it were not for me——"

She did not finish her sentence, but peered about the empty room with her green eyes and sharp nose.

"Over there in that corner near the window, Mademoiselle Verpie used to sit with her feet on her foot-warmer. Saturday was the sewing-woman's day, and Mademoiselle Verpie never missed a Saturday."

"Mademoiselle Verpie," said Lucien with a sigh: "how old would she be to-day? She was getting on in life when we were children. She used to tell a story about a box of matches. I have always remembered that story and can repeat it now word

for word just as she used to tell it. 'It was when they were placing the statues on the Pont des Saints-Pères. It was so cold that my fingers were quite numb. Coming back from doing my marketing, I was watching the workmen. There was a whole crowd of people waiting to see how they would lift such heavy statues. I had my basket on my arm. A well-dressed gentleman said to me, "Mademoiselle, you are on fire." Then I smelt a smell of sulphur and saw smoke pouring out of my basket. My threepenny box of matches had caught fire.' That was how Mademoiselle Verpie related the adventure," added Monsieur Bergeret. "She often used to tell us of it. Probably it was the greatest adventure of her life."

"You've forgotten an important part of the story, Lucien. These were Mademoiselle Verpie's exact words: 'A well-dressed gentleman said to me, "Mademoiselle, you are on fire." I answered "Go away and leave me alone." "Just as you like, Mademoiselle." Then I smelt a smell of sulphur.' "

"You are quite right, Zoe. I was mutilating the text and omitted an important passage. By her reply, Mademoiselle Verpie, who was hump-backed, showed that she was a virtuous woman. It is a point that one should bear in mind. I seem to recollect, too, that she was very easily shocked."

"Our poor mother," said Zoe, "had a mania for mending. What an amount of darning used to be done!"

"Yes, she was fond of her needle. But what I thought so charming was that before she sat down to her sewing she always placed a pot of wallflowers or daisies or a dish of fruit and green leaves on the table before her just where the light caught it. She used to say that rosy apples were as pretty as roses. I never met any one who appreciated as she did the beauty of a peach or a bunch of grapes. When she went to see the Chardins at the Louvre, she knew by instinct that they were good pictures, but she could not help feeling that she preferred her own groups. With what conviction she would say to me: 'Look, Lucien, have you ever seen anything so beautiful as this feather from a pigeon's wing?' I think no one ever loved nature more simply and frankly than she."

"Poor Mother," sighed Zoe, "and in spite of that her taste in dress was dreadful. One day she chose a blue dress for me at the Petit-Saint-Thomas. It was called electric blue, and it was terrible. That frock was the burden of my childish days."

"You were never fond of dress, you."

"You think so, do you? Well, you are mistaken. I should have loved to have pretty dresses, but the

elder sister had to go short because little Lucien needed tunics. It couldn't be helped."

They passed into a narrow room, more like a passage.

"This was Father's study," said Zoe.

"Hasn't it been cut in two by a partition? I thought it was much larger than this."

"No, it was always the same as it is now. His writing-desk was there, and above it hung the portrait of Monsieur Victor Leclerc. Why haven't you kept that engraving, Lucien?"

"What! do you mean to say that this narrow room held his motley crowds of books and contained whole nations of poets, orators and historians? When I was a child I used to listen to the silent eloquence that filled my ears with a buzz of glory. No doubt the presence of such an assembly pressed back the walls. I certainly remember it as a spacious room."

"It was very overcrowded. He would never let us tidy anything in his study."

"So it was here that our father used to work, seated in his old red arm-chair with his cat Zobeide on a cushion at his feet. Here it was that he used to look at us with the same slow smile that he never lost all through his illness, even up to the very last. I saw him smile gently at death itself, as he had smiled at life."

"You are mistaken in that, Lucien. Father did not know he was going to die."

Monsieur Bergeret did not speak for a moment, then he said:

"It is strange. I can see him now, in memory, not worn out and white with age, but still young as he was when I was quite a little child. I can see his slight, supple figure and his long black wind-tossed hair. Such mops of hair, that seemed as though whipped up by a gust of wind, crowned many of the enthusiastic heads of the men of 1830 and '48. I know it was only a trick of the brush that arranged their hair like that, but it made them look as though they lived upon the heights and in the storm. Their thoughts were loftier and more generous than ours. Our father believed in the advent of social justice and universal peace. He announced the triumph of the Republic and the harmonious formation of the United States of Europe. He would be cruelly disappointed were he to come back among us."

He was still speaking although Mademoiselle Bergeret was no longer in the study. He followed her into the empty drawing-room. There they both recalled the arm-chairs and sofa of green velvet, which as children, in their games, they used to turn into walls and citadels.

"Oh, the taking of Damietta!" cried Monsieur

Bergeret. "Do you remember it, Zoe? Mother, who allowed nothing to be wasted, used to collect all the silver paper round the bars of chocolate, and one day she gave me a pile which pleased me as much as if it had been a magnificent present. I gummed it to the leaves of an old atlas and made it into helmets and cuirasses. One day when Cousin Paul came to dinner I gave him one of these sets of armour, a Saracen's, and put the other on myself: it was the armour of St. Louis. If one goes into the matter, neither Saracens nor Christian knights wore such armour in the thirteenth century, but such a consideration did not trouble us, and I took Damietta.

"That recollection reminds me of the cruellest humiliation of my life. As soon as I had made myself master of Damietta, I took Cousin Paul prisoner and tied him up with skipping-ropes; then I pushed him with such enthusiasm that he fell on his nose, uttering piercing shrieks in spite of his courage. Mother came running in when she heard the noise, and when she saw Cousin Paul bound and prostrate on the floor she picked him up, kissed him and said: 'You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Lucien, to hit a child so much smaller than yourself.' And as a matter of fact Cousin Paul, who never grew very big, was then very small. I did not say that it had happened in the wars. I

said nothing at all, and remained covered with confusion. My shame was increased by the magnanimity of Cousin Paul who said, between his sobs, 'I haven't hurt myself.'

"Ah our beautiful drawing-room," sighed Monsieur Bergeret. "I hardly know it with this new paper. How I loved the ugly old paper with its green boughs! What a gentle shade, what a delicious warmth dwelt in the folds of the hideous claret-coloured rep curtains! Spartacus with folded arms used to look at us indignantly from the top of the clock on the mantelpiece. His chains, which I used idly to play with, came off one day in my hand. Our beautiful drawing-room! Mother would sometimes call us in there when she was entertaining old friends. We used to come here to kiss Mademoiselle Lalouette. She was over eighty years of age; her cheeks were covered with a mossy growth and her chin was bearded. One long yellow tooth protruded from her lips. They were spotted with black. What magic makes the memory of that horrible little old woman full of an attractive charm for me now? What force compels me to recall details of her queer far-away personality? Mademoiselle Lalouette and her four cats lived on an annuity of fifteen hundred francs, one half of which she spent in printing pamphlets on Louis XVII. She always had about a dozen of

them in her hand-bag. The good lady's mania was to prove that the Dauphin escaped from the Temple in a wooden horse. Do you remember the day she gave us lunch in her room in the Rue de Verneuil, Zoe? There, under layers of ancient filth, lay mysterious riches, boxes full of gold and embroideries."

"Yes," said Zoe, "she showed us some lace that had belonged to Marie Antoinette."

"Mademoiselle Lalouette's manners were excellent," continued Monsieur Bergeret. "She spoke the purest French and adhered to the old pronunciation. She used to say 'un *segret*, un *fil*, une *do*'; she made me feel as though I were living in the reign of Louis XVI. Mother used to send for us also to speak to Monsieur Mathalène who was not so old as Mademoiselle Lalouette; but he had a hideous face. Never did a gentler soul reveal itself in a more frightful shape. He was an inhibited priest whom my father had met in the clubs in 1848 and whom he esteemed for his Republican opinions. Poorer than Mademoiselle Lalouette, Monsieur Mathalène would go without food in order, like her, to print his pamphlets; but his went to prove that the sun and the moon move round the earth and are in reality no bigger than cheeses. That, by the way, was the opinion of Pierrot, but Monsieur Mathalène arrived at his conclusion only after thirty

years of meditation and calculation. One still comes upon one of his pamphlets occasionally on the old bookstalls. Monsieur Mathalène was full of zeal for the happiness of mankind, whom he terrified by his dreadful ugliness. The only exceptions to his universal love were the astronomers, whom he suspected of the blackest designs on himself. He imagined that they wanted to poison him, and insisted on preparing his own food as much out of prudence as on account of his poverty."

Thus in the empty rooms, like Ulysses in the land of the Cimmerii, did Monsieur Bergeret evoke the shades. For a moment he remained sunk in thought; then he said:

"Zoe, it must be one of two things; either in the days of our childhood there were more maniacs about than there are now, or our father befriended more than his fair share. I think he must have liked them. Pity probably drew him to them, or maybe he found them less tedious than other people; anyhow, he had a great following of them."

Mademoiselle Bergeret shook her head.

"Our parents used to receive very sensible and deserving people. I should say rather that the harmless peculiarities of some old people impressed you, and that you have retained a vivid memory of them."

"Zoe, make no mistake; we were both brought

up among people who did not think in a common or usual fashion. Mademoiselle Lalouette, Abbé Mathalène and Monsieur Grille were wanting in ordinary common sense, that is certain. Do you remember Monsieur Grille? He was tall and stout, with a red face and a close-clipped white beard. He had lost both his sons in an Alpine accident in Switzerland, and ever since, summer and winter alike, he had worn garments made of bed-ticking. Our father considered him an exquisite Hellenist. He had a delicate feeling for the poetry of the Greek lyrics. He touched with a light and sure hand the hackneyed text of Theocritus. It was his happy mania never to believe in the certain death of his two sons, and while with crazy confidence he awaited their return he lived, clad in the raiment of a carnival clown, in loving intimacy with Alcæus and Sappho."

"He used to give us caramels," said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

"His remarks were always wise, well-expressed and beautiful," went on Monsieur Bergeret, "and that used to frighten us. Logic is what alarms us most in a madman."

"On Sunday nights the drawing room was ours," said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

"Yes," said Monsieur Bergeret. "It was there we used to play games after dinner. We used to

write verses and draw pictures, and mother would play forfeits with us. Oh, the candour and simplicity of those bygone days! The simple pleasures, the charm of the old-world manners! We used to play charades; we ransacked your wardrobes, Zoe, in search of things to dress up in."

"One day you pulled the white curtains off my bed."

"That was to make robes for the Druids in the mistletoe scene, Zoe. The word we chose was *guimauve*. We were very good at charades, and Father was such a splendid audience. He did not listen to a word, but he smiled at us. I think I should have been quite a good actor, but the grown-ups never gave me a chance; they always wanted to do all the talking."

"Don't labour under any delusions, Lucien; you were incapable of playing your part in a charade. You are too absent-minded. I am the first to recognise your intellect and your talents, but you never had the gift of improvisation. You must not try to go outside your books and manuscripts."

"I am just to myself, Zoe, and I know I am not eloquent; but when Jules Guinaut and Uncle Maurice played with us one could not get a word in."

"Jules Guinaut had a real talent for comedy,"

said Mademoiselle Bergeret, "and an unquenchable spirit."

"He was studying medicine," said Monsieur Bergeret. "A good-looking fellow!"

"So people used to say."

"I think he was in love with you."

"I don't think so."

"He paid you a great deal of attention."

"That's quite a different matter."

"Then, quite suddenly, he disappeared."

"Yes."

"Don't you know what became of him?"

"No. Come, Lucien, let us go."

"Yes, let us go, Zoe; here we are the prey of the shades."

And, without turning their heads, the brother and sister stepped over the threshold of their childhood's old home and went silently down the stone staircase. When they found themselves again in the Rue des Grands-Augustins, amid the cabs and drays, the housewives and the artisans, the noise and movement of the outer world bewildered them as though they had just emerged from a long period of solitude.

CHAPTER V

ONSIEUR PANNETON DE LA BARGE had prominent eyes and a shallow mind. But his skin was so shiny that you could not help thinking that his mind must of necessity be of a fatty nature. His whole being was eloquent of arrogance, brusqueness and a pride that apparently had no fear of being importunate. Monsieur Bergeret guessed that the man had come to ask a favour of him.

They had known one another in the country. The professor, taking a walk beside the sluggish river, had often noted, on a green hillside, the slated roof of the château inhabited by Monsieur de La Barge and his family. Monsieur de La Barge himself he saw less frequently, for the latter was on visiting terms with the aristocracy of the countryside, without being sufficiently grand himself to receive the humbler folk. In the country he knew Monsieur Bergeret only on those critical days when one or another of his sons was going in for some

examination; but now, in Paris, he wished to be friendly, and he made an effort to be so.

"Dear Monsieur Bergeret, I must first of all congratulate you."

"Please do not trouble," replied Monsieur Bergeret, with a little gesture of refusal that Monsieur de La Barge quite wrongly interpreted as inspired by modesty.

"I beg your pardon, Monsieur Bergeret, a professorship at the Sorbonne is a much-coveted position, and one that you well deserve."

"How is your son Adhémar?" inquired Monsieur Bergeret, remembering the name as that of a candidate for the bachelor's degree who had interested in his incompetence the authorities of civil, military and ecclesiastical society.

"Adhémar? He is doing well, very well; a little wild perhaps, but what would you have? He has nothing to do. In some ways it might be better for him to have some settled occupation. However, he is very young; there is plenty of time; he takes after me; he will settle down once he has found his vocation."

"Didn't he do a little demonstrating at Auteuil?" asked Monsieur Bergeret gently.

"For the army, for the army," answered Monsieur de La Barge, "and I must confess that I could not find it in my heart to blame him. It

can't be helped. I am connected with the army through my father-in-law, the general, my brothers-in-law, and my cousin, the commandant."

He was too modest to mention his father, the eldest of the Panneton brothers, who was also connected with the army through the supply department, and who, in 1872, as the result of an annoying charge in the police courts, was given a light sentence, for having supplied to the Army of the East, which was marching through the snow, shoes with cardboard soles.

He died ten years later, in his château of La Barge, rich and honoured.

"I was brought up to venerate the army," continued Monsieur Panneton de La Barge. "When quite a child I worshipped a uniform. It is a family tradition. I do not attempt to hide the fact that I hold by the old style of things. I can't help it, it is in my blood. I am a Monarchist and authoritarian by temperament. I am a Royalist. Now the army is all that is left us of the Monarchy; all that is left of a glorious past. It consoles us for the present and fills us with hope for the future."

Monsieur Bergeret might have interposed with some observations of historical interest; but he did not do so, and Monsieur de La Barge continued:

"That is why I regard those who attack the

army as criminals, and those who would dare to interfere with it as fools."

"When Napoleon wished to praise one of the plays of Luce de Lancival," replied the professor, "he called it a headquarters tragedy. May I say that your philosophy is that of a General Staff? However, seeing that we live under the rule of liberty, it may perhaps be as well to conform to its customs. When one lives with men who have the habit of speech one must accustom oneself to hear anything. Do not hope that the right to discuss any subject will ever again be denied in France. Consider, too, that the army is by no means immutable; nothing in the world is that. Institutions can exist only by ceaseless modifications. The army has undergone such transformations in the course of its existence that it will probably undergo even greater changes in the future, and it is conceivable that in twenty years' time it will be quite another thing than what it is to-day."

"I prefer to tell you at once," replied Monsieur Panneton de La Barge, "that where the army is concerned I admit of no discussion. I repeat, it must not be interfered with. It represents, as it were, the battle-axe, and as such it must not be touched. During the last session of the Conseil Général of which I have the honour to be president, the Radical-Socialist minority put forward a vote in

favour of two years' service. I protested against so unpatriotic a suggestion. I had no difficulty in proving a two years' service would mean the end of the army. You cannot make an infantryman in two years, much less a cavalryman. Perhaps you will style those who clamour for the two years' service reformers. I call them wreckers. And it is the same with all other reforms. They are machinations directed against the army. If only the Socialists would say that their desire is to replace the army by a vast national guard, they would at least be honest."

"The Socialists," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "are against all attempts at territorial conquest; they propose to organize militia solely for purposes of home defence. They do not hide their views, they spread them broadcast. And possibly their views are worth some examination. You need not fear that their desires will be too quickly realized. All progress is slow and uncertain, and is followed, more often than not, by retrograde movements. The advance toward a better order of things is vague and indeterminate. The profound and innumerable forces which chain man to the past cause him to cherish its errors, superstitions, prejudices and cruelties as precious symbols of his security. Salutary innovation terrifies him. Prudence makes him imitative, and he dare not quit the tumble-down

shelter that protected his fathers and which is about to fall in upon him. Do you not agree with me, Monsieur Panneton?" inquired Monsieur Bergeret, with a charming smile.

Monsieur Panneton de La Barge's reply was that he defended the army. He represented it as misunderstood, persecuted and menaced, and in rising tones he continued:

"This campaign in favour of the Traitor, obstinate and enthusiastic as it is, whatever may be the intentions of its leaders, has a certain visible and undeniable effect. It weakens the army and injures its chiefs."

"I am going to tell you some very simple facts," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "If the army is attacked in the person of certain of its chiefs, that is not the fault of those who have asked for justice; it is the fault of those who have so long refused it. It is not the fault of those who demanded an explanation, but of those who have obstinately avoided one with extraordinary stupidity and abominable wickedness. After all, if crimes have been committed the evil is not that they have been made known but that they have been committed. They have concealed themselves in all their enormity and in all their deformity. They were not recognisable; they passed over the crowds like dark clouds. Did you imagine they

would never burst? Did you think the sun would never shine again upon the classic land of Justice, upon the country that taught the Law to Europe and the world?"

"Don't let us speak of the Affair," replied Monsieur de La Barge. "I know nothing of it. I wish to know nothing. I did not read a word of the Inquiry. Commandant de La Barge, my cousin, assured me that Dreyfus was guilty. That affirmation was enough for me. I came, dear Monsieur Bergeret, to ask your advice about my son Adhémar, whose prospects in life are now engaging my attention. A year of military service is a long time for a young fellow of good family. Three years would be nothing short of disaster. It is essential to find a means of exemption. I had thought of letting him take his degree in literature, but I'm afraid it is too difficult. Adhémar is intelligent, but he has no taste for literature."

"Well," said Monsieur Bergeret, "try the School of Higher Commercial Studies; or the Commercial Institute, or the School of Commerce. I do not know if the Watchmakers' College at Cluses would still furnish means of exemption. It used not to be difficult, I've been told, to obtain the certificate."

"But Adhémar cannot very well make watches,"

replied Monsieur de La Barge with a certain modesty.

"Then try the School of Oriental Languages," said Monsieur Bergeret obligingly. "It was an excellent institution to begin with."

"It has gone down since," sighed Monsieur de La Barge.

"It still has its good points. What about Tamil, for instance?"

"Tamil, do you think?"

"Or Malagasy."

"Malagasy, perhaps."

"There is also a certain Polynesian language which was spoken, at the beginning of this century, by only one old yellow woman. She died, leaving behind her a parrot. A German scholar collected a few words of the language from the parrot, and from these he compiled a dictionary. Perhaps this language is still taught at the School of Oriental Languages. I should advise your son to find out."

Upon this advice, Monsieur Panneton de La Barge made his adieux and thoughtfully took his departure.

CHAPTER VI

EVENTS followed their due course. Monsieur Bergeret continued to look for a flat; it was his sister who found one. Thus the positive mind has the advantage over the speculative mind. It must be admitted that Mademoiselle Bergeret made an excellent choice. She was lacking neither in experience of life nor in common sense. Having been a governess, she had lived in Russia, and had travelled about Europe. She had observed the manners and customs of the different nations. She knew the world, and that helped her to know Paris.

"That's it," she said to her brother, stopping before a new house overlooking the Luxembourg garden.

"The stairs look decent enough," said Monsieur Bergeret, "but it's rather a stiff climb."

"Nonsense, Lucien. You are quite young enough to go up five short flights of stairs without getting exhausted."

"Do you really think so?" said Lucien, flattered.

She was careful to point out that the stair-carpet ran right to the top of the house, and he smilingly accused her of being susceptible to trifling vanities.

"But it is possible," he added, "that I myself should feel slightly offended were the carpet to stop short at the floor below ours. We profess to be wise, but we still have our weak points. That reminds me of what I noticed yesterday, after lunch, as I was passing a church. The outer steps were covered with a red carpet which had been trodden, after the ceremony, by the guests at some great wedding. A working-class couple with their party were waiting for the last of the wealthy company to leave so that they might enter the church. They were laughing at the idea of climbing the steps upon this unexpected splendour. The little bride's white feet were already on the edge of the carpet when the beadle waved her away. The men in charge of the trappings of the wealthy wedding slowly rolled up the carpet of honour, and only when it formed a huge cylinder did they allow the humble wedding party to mount the bare steps. I stood for a moment and watched the worthy folk, who seemed greatly amused by the incident. Humble folk surrender with admirable equanimity to social inequality, and Lamennais was quite right to say

'that the whole social order rests on the resignation of the poor.' "

"Here we are," said Mademoiselle Bergeret.

"I'm out of breath," remarked Monsieur Bergeret.

"Because you would talk," replied Mademoiselle Bergeret. "You shouldn't tell anecdotes while you are going upstairs."

"After all," said Monsieur Bergeret, "it is the common destiny of men of learning to live close under the roof. Science and meditation are often hidden away in garrets, and when we come to think of it, no marble hall is worth an attic filled with beautiful thoughts."

"This room," replied Mademoiselle Bergeret, "is not a garret. It is lighted by a big window and is to be your study."

On hearing this, Monsieur Bergeret looked at the four walls in alarm, like a man on the brink of a precipice.

"What is the matter?" asked his sister uneasily.

But he did not reply. The little square room, hung with light paper, seemed to him dark with the unknown future. He entered with a slow and fearful step as though he were entering upon a hidden destiny. Then, measuring on the floor the position of his work-table, he said:

"I shall sit there. It is a mistake to be too

sentimental over the past and the future. They are nothing but abstract ideas, which were not originally possessed by primitive man; he acquired them only after long effort, to his great misfortune. The thought of the past in itself is sufficiently painful. I do not think any one would be willing to begin life again if he had to go over precisely the same ground. That there are delightful hours and exquisite moments I do not deny, but they are pearls and precious stones sparsely sprinkled on the harsh and dismal web of life. The course of the years is, for all its brevity, of tedious slowness, and if it be sometimes sweet to remember it is because we are able to make our minds dwell upon certain moments. And even then the sweetness is pale and melancholy. As for the future, we dare not look it in the face, so threatening is its gloomy countenance. And when you told me a moment since, Zoe, that this was to be my study, I saw myself in the future, and I could not bear the sight. I am not without courage, I think, but I am given to reflection, and reflection and fearlessness are not the best of friends."

"The most difficult thing of all," put in Zoe, "was to find three bedrooms."

"It is certain," rejoined Monsieur Bergeret, "that humanity, in its youth, did not conceive of the future and the past as we do. Now these ideas

that devour us have no reality outside ourselves. We know nothing of life, and the theory of its development through time is pure illusion. It is by some infirmity of our senses that we do not see to-morrow realised as we see yesterday. We can very well conceive of beings so organized as to be capable of the simultaneous perception of phenomena which to us appear to be separated from one another by an appreciable interval of time. We ourselves do not perceive light and sound in the order of time. We ourselves take in at a single glance, when we raise our eyes to the sky, aspects which are by no means contemporaneous. The beams of light from the stars seem indistinguishable to our eyes, yet they mingle in them, in a fraction of a second, centuries and thousands of centuries. With instruments other than those we now possess we might see ourselves lying dead in the very midst of our own life. For, as time does not in reality exist, and as the succession of facts is only an appearance, all facts are realized simultaneously and there is no such thing as the future. The future has already been; we merely discover it. Now, perhaps, you have some idea, Zoe, why I stopped short at the door of the room where I am to live. Time is a pure idea, and space is no more real than time."

"That may be," remarked Zoe, "but it is very expensive in Paris at any rate. You must have

noticed that while you were house-hunting. I don't expect you care to see my room; come, Pauline's will interest you more."

"Let us go and see them both," said Monsieur Bergeret, as he obediently promenaded his animal mechanism through the little square rooms hung with flowered paper, pursuing the course of his reflections the while.

"The savages," he said, "make no distinction between past, present and future. Languages, which are undoubtedly the oldest monuments of the human race, permit us to go back to the days when our ancestors had not yet accomplished this metaphysical operation. Monsieur Michel Bréal, who has just published an admirable essay on the subject, shows that the verb, so rich to-day in its resources for marking the priority of an action, had originally no means of expressing the past, and in order to perform this function forms were employed which implied a double affirmation of the present."

As he spoke, he returned to the room which was to be his study, which had at first sight seemed, in its emptiness, to be filled with the shadows of the ineffable future.

Mademoiselle Bergeret opened the window.

"Look, Lucien."

And, seeing the bare tops of the trees, Monsieur Bergeret smiled.

"These black boughs," he said, "will assume, in the timid April sunlight, the purple hue of their buds; then they will break forth into soft green foliage. That will be delightful. It will, indeed, be charming. Zoe, you are full of wisdom and kindness, a worthy steward and a most endearing sister. Let me kiss you."

Monsieur Bergeret kissed his sister, repeating:

"You are a good creature, Zoe."

And Mademoiselle Bergeret's reply was:

"Our father and mother were both good."

Monsieur Bergeret would have embraced her a second time, but she protested:

"You'll make my hair untidy, Lucien, and that I can't bear."

Monsieur Bergeret stretched out his hand as he stood by the open window.

"Look, Zoe, to the right. On the site of those ugly buildings used to be the Pépinière. There, our elders have told me, was a maze of paths bordered by green trelliswork windows among the shrubs. Our father used to walk there when he was a young man. He used to read the philosophy of Kant and the novels of George Sand, seated on a bench behind the statue of Velléda. A dreaming Velléda, with hands folded over her mystic sickle, and crossed

legs, who was the object of much generous and youthful adoration. The students used to sit at her feet discussing love, justice and liberty. They did not enlist in those days in the party of untruth, injustice and tyranny.

"The Empire destroyed the Pépinière. It was an evil deed, for there is a soul even in inanimate things. The noble ideas of many young men perished with the gardens. How many beautiful dreams and stupendous hopes have taken shape under the shadow of Maindron's romantic Velléda! To-day our students have palaces with a bust of the President of the Republic over the mantelpiece in the principal room. Who will restore to them the winding alleys of the Pépinière, where they were wont to discuss the establishment of peace and happiness and the liberty of the world? Who will give back to them the garden where, amid the joyous songs of the birds, they repeated the generous sayings of their masters, Quinet and Michelet?"

"No doubt they were enthusiastic enough," said Mademoiselle Bergeret, "but in the end they became doctors and lawyers in their own provinces. One must resign oneself to the mediocrity of life. You know well enough, it is very difficult to live, and one must not expect too much of one's fellow-creatures. Anyhow, do you like the rooms?"

"Yes, and I'm sure Pauline will be delighted. She has a charming room."

"She has, but young girls are never delighted with anything."

"Pauline is not unhappy with us."

"No, indeed. She is very happy, but she does not realize it."

"I am going to the Rue Saint-Jacques," announced Monsieur Bergeret, "to ask Roupart to put up some shelves in my study."

CHAPTER VII

MONSIEUR BERGERET had a great liking and esteem for craftsmen. As he did not indulge in any elaborate appointments, he rarely employed workmen, but, when he did employ one, he tried to enter into conversation with him, being sure of hearing something worth listening to.

So he extended a gracious welcome to Roupart, the carpenter, who came one morning to put up some bookshelves in his study.

Riquet, as was his custom, lay in the depths of his master's arm-chair, peacefully slumbering. But the immemorial recollection of the perils which surrounded his wild forbears in the forests makes the domestic dog sleep lightly. It should further be said that this hereditary readiness to awaken promptly was fostered in Riquet by the sense of duty. Riquet regarded himself as a watch-dog Firmly convinced that his mission in life was to guard the house, he was proud and happy in his vocation.

Unfortunately, however, he thought of all

houses as being what they are in the country or the fables of La Fontaine, standing betwixt courtyard and garden, of which a dog could make the circuit, sniffing a soil redolent of the odours of cattle and manure. He had formed no idea of the plan of the flat occupied by his master on the fifth story of a great block of buildings. So, unacquainted with the limits of his domain, he was not quite clear as to what he had to guard. And he was a ferocious guardian. Supposing that the appearance of this stranger clad in patched blue trousers, smelling of perspiration and carrying his load of planks, was imperilling the house, he leaped from his chair and proceeded to bark at the man, retreating before him with heroic deliberation. Monsieur Bergeret bade him be silent, and he regretfully obeyed, sad and surprised to see his devotion useless and his signals disregarded. His earnest gaze, turned upon his master, seemed to say:

"So you allow this anarchist to enter, dragging his infernal machine behind him. Well, come what may, I've done my duty."

Then he went back to his chair and slept again. Monsieur Bergeret, abandoning the scholiasts of Virgil, entered into conversation with the carpenter. First he questioned him as to the purchasing, cutting and polishing of different woods and the joining of the planks. He loved to obtain fresh information

and he realized the excellence of the vulgar tongue.

His face to the wall, Roupart answered him between intervals of long silence, during which he took measurements. It was then that he discussed panelling and the making of joints.

"A tenon and mortice joint needs no glue if the work is properly done."

"Is there not also such a thing as a dovetail joint?" inquired Monsieur Bergeret.

"It's an old-fashioned affair; they don't make 'em now," replied the carpenter.

Thus the professor learned something by listening to the artisan. Having made sufficient headway with his work, the carpenter turned to Monsieur Bergeret. His sunken, large-featured face, his brown complexion, his hair matted over his forehead, and his little goatee, grey with dust, gave him the look of a bronze figure. His smile, which was gentle, but came with difficulty, showed his white teeth and gave him a youthful look.

"I know you, Monsieur Bergeret."

"Do you really?"

"Oh yes, I know you. That was something a bit out of the common what you did, and no mistake. You don't mind my mentioning it, I hope?"

"Not in the least."

"Well, then, you did something quite out of the

common. You cut your own class, refused to have any truck with the brass hats and sky pilots."

"I hate forgers, my friend," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "Surely that is permissible in a philologist. I have made no secret of my opinions, but I have not gone out of my way to spread them. How did you get to know of them?"

"I will tell you. One sees all sorts of people at the workshop in the Rue Saint-Jacques. All sorts and conditions, big and little. One day I was planing some wood, and I heard Pierre say: 'That low-down cur of a Bergeret.' And Paul asks him, 'Won't somebody smash his jaw for him?' And then I realized that you were on the right side in the Affair. There aren't many like you in this part of Paris."

"And what do your friends say?"

"There aren't many Socialists hereabouts, and the few there are don't agree. Last Saturday at the club there was a lot of tag-rag and bobtail and the whole lot of us started quarrelling. Old Fléchier, who fought in 1870, a Communard, who was deported—he's a man, he is—he got up on the platform and said: 'Citizens, keep your hair on! The intellectual bourgeois are no less bourgeois than the military bourgeois. Let the capitalists scratch each other's eyes out. Fold your arms and keep your eyes on the anti-Semites. At present they

are drilling with sham guns and wooden swords, but when the time comes to expropriate the capitalists I don't see why we shouldn't make a start with the Jews.'

"That pretty well brought the house down. But, I ask you, should an old Communard, a good revolutionary, talk in that way? I am not educated like old Fléchier, who has read Marx, but I could see well enough that his arguments were all wrong. It seems to me that Socialism, which stands for truth, should also stand for justice and kindliness, that everything just and kindly must come from it as naturally as the apple comes from the apple-tree. I take it that when we fight against injustice we are fighting for ourselves, for the working-classes, because it's on us that all injustice lies so heavy. In my opinion, everything that is equitable is a beginning of Socialism. Like Jaurès, I believe that to take sides with the upholders of violence and falsehood is to turn one's back upon the social revolution. I know nothing of Jews or Christians. I recognize only men—and there again the only distinction I make is between the just and the unjust. Jews or Christians, it is difficult for the rich to be just; but when the laws are just, men will be just too. Even now the Collectivists and Anarchists are preparing for the future by fighting against tyranny and inspiring

the people with hatred of war and love for their fellow-men. Even now we can do something. It'll keep us from dying desperate with the bitterness of rage in our hearts. For sure enough we shan't see the triumph of our ideas, and when Collectivism is established all over the world I shall have been carried feet foremost from my garret a long while before. But there! I'm jawing and the time's going."

He pulled out his watch, and seeing that it was eleven o'clock he put on his waistcoat, picked up his tools, and ramming his cap on the back of his head, said, without turning round:

"It's a sure thing that the middle classes are rotten. The Dreyfus case showed that plainly enough."

With that, he went off to his dinner.

Then, with wide-open mouth, bristling hair and flaming eyes, Riquet rushed at Roupart's departing heels, pursuing them with frantic barks. It may have been that a bad dream had troubled his light slumber and caused him to take advantage of the enemy's retreat, or, as his master feigned to believe, that his anger had been aroused by the name which had just been pronounced.

Alone with Riquet, Monsieur Bergeret addressed him gently in these sorrowful words:

"You, too, poor little blackamoor, so feeble in

spite of your sharp teeth and your deep bark, the apparent strength of which renders your weakness ridiculous and your cowardice amusing—you, too, worship the pomps of the flesh. You bow to the old iniquities and worship injustice out of respect for the social order that gives you food and a roof over your head. You, too, would uphold an illegal judgment obtained by fraud and untruth; you, too, are the plaything of appearances and allow yourself to be seduced by lies. You have been brought up on clumsy falsehoods and your darkened mind feeds on the works of darkness. You deceive and are deceived with delightful thoroughness, and you, too, have your racial hatreds, your cruel prejudices and your contempt for the unfortunate."

And as Riquet gazed at his master with a look of innocence Monsieur Bergeret continued still more gently:

"Yes, I know: you have a vague goodness, the goodness of a Caliban. You are a pious dog; you have your theology and your morality, and you try to do well. But then you know nothing. You keep watch over the house, guarding it even against its friends and those who would make it more beautiful. The workman whom you wanted to drive out of the house has, in his simple fashion, some admirable ideas. But you did not listen to him.

"Your shaggy ears are turned not to him whose

words are wisest but to him who makes the most noise; and the natural fear which in the days of the cave-dwellers was the wise counsellor of your ancestors and of mine—the fear that created the gods and crime—makes you turn from the unfortunate and deprives you of pity. And you do not even want to be just. The white face of the new goddess Justice is strange to you, and you prostrate yourself before the old gods, black like yourself with fear and violence. You admire brute force, thinking it the sovereign power, because you do not know that it destroys itself. You do not know that all chains must fall before a just idea.

"You do not know that true strength lies in wisdom and that through wisdom alone the nations rise to greatness. You do not know that that which makes the glory of the nations is not the senseless clamour raised in public places, but the noble thought concealed in some garret, which, spreading one day over the whole world, will change its face. You do not know that those who have suffered imprisonment, outrage and exile, for justice' sake, have honoured their country in the act You do not understand."

CHAPTER VIII

ONSIEUR BERGERET was in his study chatting with his pupil, Monsieur Goubin.

"I found to-day," he said, "in a friend's library, a little book which is extremely rare and perhaps unique. Whether he is ignorant of its existence, or thinks it of little value, Brunet does not mention it in his Manual. It is a little duodecimo entitled: *Les charactères et pourtraictures tracés d'après les modelles anticques.* It was printed in the year 1538 in the learned Rue Saint-Jacques."

"Do you know the author?" inquired Monsieur Goubin.

"The author is a certain Master Nicole Langelier, a Parisian," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "His style is not so pleasant as that of Amyot, but it is clear and full of meaning. I enjoyed reading his book, and copied out a chapter that struck me as very curious. Would you care to hear it?"

"Very much," replied Monsieur Goubin.

Monsieur Bergeret took some papers from the table and read the heading:

"Concerning the Trublions which arose in the time of the Republick."

Monsieur Goubin inquired who these Trublions were. Monsieur Bergeret replied that he would no doubt discover that from what followed, and that it was a good plan to read a text before commenting on it. And he read as follows:

"In those days there appeared in the city folk that uttered loud cries and were named Trublions, inasmuch as they served a chief named Trublion, who was of high lineage but small understanding and full of the arrogance of youth. And the Trublions also had another chief named Tintinnabule who made excellent speeches and marvellous songs and had been cast forth from the republick by the law and usage of ostracism. In truth the said Tintinnabule was adverse to Trublion; when the one pulled up stream the other pulled down. But the Trublions cared nothing for that, being so crazy that they did not know whither they were steering.

"At that time there lived in the mountains a villager named Robin Honeyman, who had already a hoary head, like a shock of hay or straw; a person full of guile and subtlety, and very expert in the art of feigning, who believed that he could govern the State by means of these Trublions, and he flattered them to draw them about him, whistling to them as

sweetly as a flute, after the guise of the fowler piping to little birds. And the good Tintinnabule fell into great amazement and affliction by reason of this piping and had a great fear lest Robin Honeyman should entice his goslings.

"Under Trublion, Tintinnabule and Robin Honeyman there held command over the Trublion troops:

"Four palmers of exceeding sourness.

"Twenty-one baptized Jews.

"Twenty-five worthy begging friars.

"Eight makers of almanacks.

"Forty demagogues, misoxenes, xenophobes, xenoctones and xenophages; and six bushels of noblemen professing devotion to the beauteous lady of Bourdes in Navarre.

"In this fashion did sundry and contrary chiefs govern the Trublions. They were a right unmannerly race, and even as the Harpies, as Virgil reports, sat upon trees and shrieked horribly, and spoiled all that lay beneath them, in like fashion these froward Trublions climbed upon the cornices and pinnacles of the churches and houses, thence to do despite to the courteous citizens, to drop filth upon them and to piss upon them.

"And they diligently chose an old colonel named Gelgopole, who was the most inept in war that could be found, an enemy of justice and a disdainer of the laws, and made of him their idol and paragon, and went about the city crying, 'Long life to the old Colonel!' And the little school-urchins likewise squealed at their heels,

'Long life to the old Colonel!' Then the aforesaid Trublions gathered together in many assemblies and conventicles in which they cried: 'Health to the old Colonel' with such loudness of voice that the elements themselves were astounded and the birds flying above their heads fell to earth benumbed and dead. In sooth this was a very base madness and a most horrible frenzy.

"Then the said Trublions proclaimed that he who would faithfully serve the city and merit the civic crown, which was fashioned of the leaves of the oak-tree bound with a fillet of wool and naught besides, and honourable among all crowns, should utter furious cries and insane discourses, likewise those that guided the plough, and those that reaped and gathered the harvest, and led their flocks to the pasture and grafted their pear-trees in this fair land of vine and corn, of green meadows and fruitful gardens, did not serve the State. Neither did their fellows that hewed the stone and builded in the cities and villages houses with roofs of red tiles and fine slate, nor the weavers, nor the glass-workers, nor the stone-cutters that laboured within the bowels of Cybele. Nor the wise men who laboured in their closed studies and spacious libraries knowing many wondrous secrets of Nature: nor the mothers giving milk unto their babes, nor the good old wives spinning with their distaffs in the chimney-corner, telling tales to the little children. But, said they, the Trublions served the State by braying like asses at a fair. And be it said for justice' sake that in so doing they thought to do

well, for they had naught but the clouds of their brains and the breath of their mouths for their own, and they expended their breath with great force for the public weal and common profit.

"And they cried not only 'Long life to the old Colonel!' but they also cried without respite that they loved the State. In which they grievously offended the other citizens, for thus they gave men to understand that those folk who shouted not did not love their mother the State nor the fair land of their birth, which was a manifest imposture and an injury not to be suffered, for men drink with their mother's milk this natural love and it is sweet to breathe one's natal air.

"Now there were living at this time in the city and country many wise and prudent men, who loved their city and republick with a dearer and purer love than ever the Trublions bare them.

"For the said wise men desired that their city should remain wise and virtuous as themselves, blooming with graces and virtues, bearing fitly in her right hand the golden rod of justice, and that their city should be glad, careful and free, and not (as the Trublions contrary-wise desired) bearing in her hands a great club wherewith to belabour the good citizens and a blessed chaplet to mutter *Aves*, and filthily and miserably subject to the old Colonel Gelgopole and the said Tintinnabule. For in sooth these latter wished her subject to monks, hypocrites, bigots, canting

rogues and impostors; lousy, filthy, frocked and hooded, shaven and barefoot; for devourers of crucifixes, bleaters of requiems, beggars, defrauders and cozeners of testaments swarmed in those days and had already by secret means acquired in houses and woods, fields and meadows well-nigh one third part of the land of France. And they diligently laboured (these Trublions) to render the city yet more rude and uncomely. For they conceived a great aversion to meditation and philosophy and all arguments deduced from upright feeling and shrewd reasoning, and all subtle thoughts, and condemned everything save force, only esteeming this latter because it was wholly brutish. Thus did the Trublions love their State and the country of their birth."

As he read this old French text, Monsieur Bergeret was careful not to sound all the letters with which it was bristling after the fashion of the Renaissance. He had a feeling for the beauty of his native language. He paid no attention to orthography, considering it a negligible thing: but he had, on the other hand, the greatest respect for the old pronunciation, so light and fluent, which in our days, unfortunately, is becoming heavier and more clumsy. Monsieur Bergeret read his text according to the traditional pronunciation, and in so doing restored their youth and novelty to the old words. Their meaning emerged

clear and limpid, causing Monsieur Goubin to remark:

"What I like about that passage is the style; it is so naïve."

"Do you think so?" said Monsieur Bergeret.

And he continued:

"And the Trublions said that they would defend the colonels and soldiers of the State and republick, which was mockery and derision, for the colonels and soldiers, who are armed with guns, muskets, artillery and other very terrible engines, are employed to defend and not to be defended by the unarmed citizens, and it did not seem possible that there were in the city folk fond enough to attack their own defenders, and the prudent men opposed to the Trublions asked only that the colonels should be honourably subject to the august and holy laws of the State and republick. But the said Trublions continued to shout and would hear nothing for that niggardly nature had deprived them of understanding.

"And the Trublions nourished a great hatred of foreign nations. The names alone of the said nations and peoples made their eyes stand out of their heads like those of cray-fish, very horrible to behold; they waved their arms like the sails of windmills, so that there was not among them a notary's clerk nor a butcher's 'prentice but wished to send a challenge to a king or queen or emperor of some great country, and the least hatmaker or taverner

made as though he were ready at any moment to go to the wars, but in the end he remained in his chamber.

"And as it is true that fools, who are ever greater in number than the wise, march to the sound of vain cymbals, so people of little knowledge and understanding (and there are many such among rich folk as well as among the poor) joined the company of the Trublions and were Trublions with them. And there was a horrible uproar in the State, so that the wise maiden Minerva, sitting in her temple, that she might not have her ear-drums broken by such bangers of saucepans and infuriated popinjays, filled her ears with the wax brought her by her well-beloved bees, thus giving her faithful ones, wise men, philosophers and good law-givers of the State, to understand that it were waste of time to enter into wise dispute and learned argument with these trublioning and tintinnabulating Trublions. And some persons in the realm, and not the least important, being astounded by this hurly-burly, perceived that these crazy loons were on the point of over-throwing the republick and over-turning the noble and glorious State, which would have been a most lamentable happening. But a day came when the Trublions burst asunder, for they were full of wind."

His reading finished, Monsieur Bergeret replaced the pamphlet upon the table.

"These old books," he said, "amuse and

divert our minds, they make us forget the present day."

"That is true," replied Monsieur Goubin.

But he smiled; a thing he seldom did.

CHAPTER IX

URING the holidays, Monsieur Mazure, a keeper of departmental archives, came for a few days to Paris to canvass the offices of the Ministry for the Cross of the Legion of Honour, to make certain historical researches among the National Archives, and to see the Moulin-Rouge. Before entering upon his labours, on the day after his arrival, he called, about six o'clock in the evening, upon Monsieur Bergeret, who welcomed him benevolently. As the heat of the day was overwhelming to those who were detained in the city, under the scorching roofs and in the streets filled with acrid dust, a bright idea occurred to Monsieur Bergeret. He took Monsieur Mazure to the Bois, to a *cabaret,* where tables were set out under the trees, by the brink of a slumbering sheet of water.

There, in the cool shade and the peace of the foliage, they enjoyed an excellent dinner, and exchanged views upon familiar topics, discoursing in turn upon learning and the divers fashions of

loving. Then, without preconcerted design, they yielded to an inevitable impulse and spoke of the Affair.

Monsieur Mazure was greatly perturbed by the Affair. Being both by persuasion and temperament a Jacobin and a patriot, after the manner of Barère and Saint-Just, he had joined the Nationalist hosts of his own department, and in company with Royalists and clerics, his *bêtes noires*, he had, in the superior interest of his country, uplifted his voice for the unity and indivisibility of the Republic. He had even become a member of the league of which Monsieur Panneton de La Barge was the president, and as this league had voted an address to the King it was slowly dawning upon him that it was anti-republican, and he no longer felt easy in respect of its principles. As a matter of fact, being accustomed to dealing with documents, and quite capable of bringing his intelligence to bear upon a critical inquiry of a fairly simple character, he experienced some difficulty in upholding a system that displayed an audacity hitherto unexampled in the fabrication and falsification of documents intended to ruin an innocent man. He felt that he was surrounded by imposture, and yet he would not admit the fact that he had made a mistake, such an admission being possible only to minds of unusual quality.

He protested, on the contrary, that he was right,

and it is only fair to admit that he was kept in ignorance, constrained, crushed and compressed by the compact mass of his fellow-citizens. The knowledge of the inquiry and the discussion of the documents had not yet reached his little town, comfortably situated on the green banks of a sluggish river. There, obstructing the light, filling public offices and sitting on the bench, was that host of politicians and churchmen, whom Monsieur Méline had formerly sheltered beneath the skirts of his provincial frock-coat, waxing prosperous in acquiescent ignorance of the truth. This elect society, which enlisted crime in the interests of patriotism and religion, made it respectable for all, even for the Radical-Socialist chemist Mandar.

The department was all the more safely protected against any revelation of the most notorious facts in that it was administered by an Israelitish prefect.

Monsieur Worms-Clavelin held himself bound, by the very fact that he was a Jew, to serve the interests of the anti-Semites of his administration with greater zeal than a Catholic prefect would have displayed in his place. With a prompt and sure hand he stifled in his department the growing faction in favour of revision. He favoured the leagues of the clerical agitators, causing them to prosper so wonderfully that citizens Francis de Pressensé, Jean Psichari, Octave Mirbeau and Pierre Quillard, who

came to the departmental capital to speak their minds as free men, felt as though they had stepped straight into a city of the sixteenth century. They encountered none but idolatrous papists, howling for their death, who wanted to massacre them. And as Monsieur Worms-Clavelin, who since the judgment of 1894 was fully convinced that Dreyfus was innocent, made no mystery of that conviction after dinner, as he smoked his cigar, the Nationalists whose cause he favoured had good reason to count on a loyal support which was not dependent upon personal feeling.

This firm hold over the department whose archives he kept profoundly impressed Monsieur Mazure, who was an ardent Jacobin and capable of heroism, but who, like the company of heroes, marched only to the sound of the drum. Monsieur Mazure was not a brute. He felt that he owed it to others and to himself to explain his attitude.

After the soup, as they were waiting for the trout, he leaned his arms on the table and remarked:

"My dear Bergeret, I am a patriot and a republican; I do not know whether Dreyfus is guilty or innocent. I do not want to know; it's not my business. He may be innocent, but there is no doubt that the Dreyfusites are guilty. They have been guilty of a great impertinence in substituting their own personal opinion for a decision given by repub-

lican justice. Besides, they have stirred up the whole country. Trade is suffering."

"There's a pretty woman," said Monsieur Bergeret, "tall, straight and slender as a young tree."

"Pooh!" said Monsieur Mazure. "A mere doll."

"You speak very frivolously," returned Monsieur Bergeret. "A doll, when alive, is a great force of Nature."

"I don't trouble my head about that woman or any other," said Monsieur Mazure. "Perhaps because my own wife is a very well-made woman."

So he said and did his best to believe. The truth was he had married the old servant and mistress of his two predecessors. Bourgeois society had kept aloof from her for ten years, but as soon as Monsieur Mazure joined the Nationalist leagues of the department she found herself received in the best society of the town. General Cartier de Chalmot's wife went about with her, and the wife of Colonel Despautères could hardly tear herself away from her.

"The reason why I attach special blame to the Dreyfusites," added Monsieur Mazure, "is that they have weakened our national defence and lowered our prestige in the eyes of other nations."

The sun was shedding his last crimson rays between the black tree-trunks. Monsieur Bergeret felt that he must in honesty reply:

"Just consider, my dear Mazure," he said, "that if the affairs of an obscure captain have become a matter of national importance the fault is not ours, but that of the ministers who erected the support of an erroneous and illogical sentence into a system of government. If the Keeper of the Seals had done his duty and proceeded to the revision of the trial as soon as it was clearly proved to be necessary, no one would have said anything. It was during this lamentable evasion of justice that protests began to make themselves heard. What upset the whole country, what is calculated to injure us abroad and at home, was that those in authority obstinately persisted in a monstrous piece of wickedness which increased day by day under the covering of lies with which they strove to hide it."

"What else would you expect?" said Monsieur Mazure. "I am a good patriot and a republican."

"Then since you are a republican," said Monsieur Bergeret, "you must feel an alien, a solitary, among your fellow-citizens. There are few republicans left in France to-day. The Republic herself has created none. It's absolute government that makes republicans. The love of liberty is sharpened on the grinding-stone of royalty or imperialism, but it grows blunt in a country where people believe they are free. People seldom care much for what they possess. Reality as a rule is not a very pleasant

thing. One needs wisdom to be content with it. We can safely say that to-day Frenchmen under fifty are not republicans."

"They are not monarchists."

"No, they are not monarchists either, for while as a rule men care little for what they have, because what they have is not usually pleasant, they fear change because it contains the Unknown. It is the Unknown that frightens them most; that is the source and fountain-head of all fear. You see that in universal suffrage, which would produce an incalculable effect but for this terror of the Unknown, which annihilates it. It contains a force which ought to perform prodigies of good or evil, but the fear of the change contained in the Unknown gives it power, and the monster bows his head to the yoke."

"Would the gentlemen care for a *pêche au marasquin?*" inquired the head waiter.

His voice was gentle and persuasive, and none of the occupied tables escaped his vigilant gaze. But Monsieur Bergeret did not reply; he was watching a lady who was advancing along the sandy path, wearing a Louis XIV "church-lamp" hat of rice-straw, covered with roses, and a white muslin gown, the body of which was loose and floating, drawn in at the waist by a pink sash. The ruche round her neck looked like the collar of wings enclosing the

face of an angel. Monsieur Bergeret recognized Madame de Gromance, whom he had more than once met, to his secret agitation, in the dull monotony of provincial streets. He saw that she was accompanied by a very smart young man, whose attitude was altogether too correct for him to appear anything but bored.

He stopped at the table next to that occupied by Monsieur Bergeret and his friend, when Madame de Gromance happened to glance round and see Monsieur Bergeret. An expression of displeasure came over her face, and she led her companion to the remotest corner of the lawn, where they sat down under the shade of a large tree. The sight of Madame de Gromance filled Monsieur Bergeret with that bitter-sweet feeling of which a pleasure-loving soul is conscious at the sight of the beauty of living forms.

He asked the head waiter whether he knew the lady and gentleman.

"I know them in a kind of way," replied the waiter. "They often come here, but I don't know their names. We see so many people! On Saturday the place was crowded. There were covers all over the grass and under the trees, as far as the hedge that encloses the lawn."

"Really?" said Monsieur Bergeret. "There were covers under all those trees?"

"Yes, and on the terrace as well, and in the kiosk."

Busily cracking almonds, Monsieur Mazure had not noticed the muslin dress. He inquired which lady they were speaking of. Monsieur Bergeret, however, decided to keep Madame de Gromance's secret, and made no reply.

Night had fallen. Here and there a lamp whose radiance was softened by a shade of white or pink paper marked the position of a table and revealed shapes surrounded by faint haloes of light. Beneath one of these discreet lights the little white plume surmounting a straw hat was drawing closer and closer to the gleaming cranium of an elderly man. At the next table were two youthful faces, more unsubstantial than the moths that fluttered around them. Not in vain was the white round shape of the moon ascending the paling sky.

"I trust you are satisfied, gentlemen," said the head waiter.

And without waiting for a reply he directed his vigilant steps elsewhere.

"Look at those people dining in the kindly darkness," said Monsieur Bergeret with a smile. "Those little white plumes, and right at the back, under that great tree, those roses on a Louis Quatorze straw hat. They are eating, drinking and making love, and to this man they are nothing but covers! They have instincts and desires, even thoughts per-

haps, and they are covers! What strength of mind and of language! This knight of the appetite is a great man."

"We have had a very pleasant dinner," said Monsieur Mazure, rising. "This restaurant is frequented by the very smartest people."

"Their smartness," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "was possibly not of the highest category. But some of them, certainly, were graceful and charming enough. I must confess, however, that it gives me less pleasure to contemplate these fashionable folk since a vile conspiracy has aroused the sickly fanaticism and thoughtless cruelty of their poor little brains. The Affair has revealed the moral sickness with which our fashionable society is afflicted, just as the vaccine of Koch discovers the lesions of tuberculosis in an infected organism. Fortunately the depths of the human ocean lie beneath this gilded scum. But when will my country be delivered from ignorance and hatred?"

CHAPTER X

HE Baronne Jules, the widow of the great Baron and the mother of the little Baron, had lost, under circumstances which are familiar to us, her lover Raoul Marcien.* She was too tender-hearted to live alone, and it would have been a pity had she done so. It came to pass that one summer night, between the Bois and the Étoile, she took unto herself a new lover. It is fitting to record this fact, as it is not unconnected with public affairs.

The Baronne Jules de Bonmont, who had spent the month of June at Montil, on the banks of the Loire, was passing through Paris on her way to Gmunden. Her house being shut up, she dined at one of the restaurants in the Bois with her brother, Baron Wallstein, Monsieur and Madame de Gromance, Monsieur de Terremondre, and young Lacrisse, who like herself were passing through Paris.

As they all moved in good society they were all Nationalists, Baron Wallstein as much as any of

* See *The Amethyst Ring.*

them. An Austrian Jew, expelled from his country by the Viennese anti-Semites, he had settled in France, where he founded a well-known anti-Semite paper and took refuge in the friendship of the Church and the Army. Monsieur de Terremondre, a gentleman of the lesser nobility, and a small land-owner, displayed just enough clerical and military enthusiasm to be able to identify himself with the superior territorial aristocracy with which he associated. The Gromances had too much interest in the return of the monarchy not to desire it seriously. Their financial situation was very precarious. Madame de Gromance, who was pretty, well-made, and mistress of her own actions, had so far kept free of the Affair, but her husband, who was no longer young, and was fast approaching the age when a man feels the need of comfort, security and consideration, sighed for better days and impatiently awaited the advent of the King. He was confident that he would be created a peer of France by the restored Philippe. He based his right to a seat in the Luxembourg on his loyalty to the Throne, and entered the ranks of Monsieur Méline's republicans, whom the King, if he wished to secure them, would have to reward. Young Lacrisse was secretary to the league of the Royalist youth of the department in which the Baronne had estates and the Gromances creditors. Seated at the little table under the trees,

lit by candles whose pink shades were surrounded by swooping moths, these five felt that they were united by a single idea, which Joseph Lacrisse happily expressed by saying:

"France must be saved."

It was the day of vast projects and stupendous hopes. They had, it is true, lost President Faure and the Minister Méline, who—the former strutting in dress-coat and pumps, the latter in a frock-coat made by a village tailor, taking short steps in his heavy hob-nailed shoes—were leading the Republic and Justice to their downfall. Méline had left the Government and Faure had left the world of the living at the very height of the banquet. It must also be recognized that the obsequies of the latter had not produced all that was expected of them, and that the *coup* they had hoped to bring off at the lying-in-state had proved abortive. It was also true that after smashing President Loubet's hat the gentry of the cornflower and the white carnation had received their chastisement at the hands of the Socialists. It is true that a Republican Ministry was formed, and obtained a majority. But in the ranks of the reactionary party were the clergy, the magistracy, the army, the landed gentry, industry, commerce, part of the Chamber, and almost the whole of the Press. And as young Lacrisse remarked, if the Keeper of the Seals had taken it into

his head to order a search to be made at the headquarters of the Royalist and Anti-Jewish Committees they would not have found one police commissary in the whole of France to seize the compromising documents.

"Anyhow," said Monsieur de Terremondre, "poor Monsieur Faure was of great service to us."

"He loved the army," sighed Madame de Bonmont.

"Assuredly," continued Monsieur de Terremondre. "And then by his display he prepared people for the monarchy. Coming after him, the King will not seem to be a burden upon the people; his establishment will not seem ridiculous."

Madame de Bonmont was anxious to be assured that the King would enter Paris in a coach drawn by six white horses.

"One day last summer," continued Monsieur de Terremondre, "as I was walking down the Rue Lafayette, I found all the traffic stopped, with groups of police here and there, and the pavements lined with people. I asked a citizen what this meant, and he solemnly replied that they had been waiting an hour for the President, who was returning to the Élysée after a visit to Saint-Denis. I looked at the respectful idlers and at the well-to-do people, who, with little parcels in their hands, were sitting quiet and watchful in their waiting fiacres,

deferentially losing their trains. I was pleased to note that all these people adapted themselves so easily to the customs of a monarchy, and that the Parisians were quite ready to welcome their sovereign."

"The city of Paris is no longer republican. All is going well," said Joseph Lacrisse.

"So much the better," remarked Madame de Bonmont.

"Does your father share your hopes?" said Monsieur de Gromance of the youthful secretary of the Young Royalists.

As a matter of fact, the opinion of Maître Lacrisse, advocate to the Church authorities, was not to be despised. Maître Lacrisse was working with the Headquarters Staff and preparing for the Rennes trial. He had to go through the depositions of the generals and get them to repeat their evidence. A Nationalist, and one of the leading lights of the Bar, he was, however suspected of having little confidence in the issue of the Monarchist plots. The old man had worked in former days for the Comte de Chambord and the Comte de Paris, and he knew from experience that the Republic would not easily be ousted, and that she was not so docile as she appeared. He had no faith in the Senate, and as he made money at the Palais he resigned himself willingly enough to living in France under a kingless

monarchy. He did not share the hopes of his son Joseph, but was too indulgent to condemn the ardour of enthusiastic youth.

"My father," replied Joseph Lacrisse, "has his own work; I have mine; but our efforts are convergent." And leaning towards Madame de Bonmont he whispered, "We shall strike our blow during the Rennes trial."

"May God help you," said Madame de Gromance, with a pious sigh. "It is time, if we want to save France."

It was very hot and they ate their ices in silence. Then the conversation languidly revived. It progressed fitfully, consisting of commonplace remarks and private observations. Madame de Gromance and Madame de Bonmont discussed clothes.

"There is a hint this year of pleated skirts coming into fashion," said Madame de Gromance, with inward satisfaction as she pictured the plump proportions of the Baronne in a full skirt.

"You would never guess," said Gromance, "where I went to-day. I went to the Senate. They were not sitting, and Laprat-Teulet took me all over the building. I saw everything—the hall, the gallery of Busts, the library. It is a very fine building."

What he did not tell them was that, in the semicircle where the peers were to sit when the King came to his own once more, he had felt the velvet

chairs and chosen his place in the centre. And before he went out he had asked Laprat-Teulet where the treasury was. This visit to the palace of the future peers had revived his covetousness. He repeated with heartfelt and sincere conviction:

"We must save France, Monsieur Lacrisse, we must save France, and it will only be in the nick of time."

Lacrisse would see to that. He displayed much confidence and affected great discretion. According to him, everything was in readiness. They would no doubt be forced to smash Worms-Clavelin's head for him and perhaps do the same for two or three more of the Dreyfusites of the department. And he added, swallowing a piece of crystallized peach:

"It's bound to come."

Then Baron Wallstein spoke. He spoke at length; he made them realize his knowledge of affairs; he gave them advice, and related a few stories from Vienna which greatly amused him. Then, in conclusion:

"It is all very satisfactory," he said, with his irrepressible German accent; "it is all very satisfactory, but you must admit that your *coup* at President Faure's funeral was a failure. If I speak like this it is because I am your friend. One owes the truth to one's friends. Do not make a second mistake, because in that case you would lose your following."

He looked at his watch, and seeing that he had barely time to get to the Opera before the close of the performance, lighted a cigar and rose from the table.

The position of Joseph Lacrisse demanded discretion; he was a conspirator. But he loved to display his power, to reveal the consideration in which he was held. He took from his pocket a blue morocco letter-case, which he carried against his breast, and drew from it a letter which he handed to Madame de Bonmont, saying with a smile:

"They can search my flat if they like; I carry all my documents about me."

Madame de Bonmont took the letter, read it in a whisper, and, flushing with respect and emotion, returned it with a hand that trembled slightly to Joseph Lacrisse. And when the august letter, returned to its blue morocco case, once more resumed its place next the secretary's heart, the Baronne gazed at his left breast with a lingering expression at once tearful and filled with fire. In her eyes young Lacrisse had suddenly become resplendent with romantic beauty.

The diners who still lingered under the trees of the restaurant began to feel the dampness and the chill of the night. The pink lights gleaming on the flowers and glass flickered out one by one on the deserted tables. At the request of Madame de Gromance and the Baronne, Joseph Lacrisse for the

second time drew the royal letter from his letter-case and read in a low but distinct voice:

"My dear Joseph,

"I am greatly delighted by the patriotic enthusiasm which our friends are displaying, thanks to your efforts. I have seen G. D., who seemed to me to be excellently well disposed towards us.

"Cordially yours,

"Philippe."

After reading the note Lacrisse replaced the sheet of paper in his blue morocco letter-case against his heart, beneath the white carnation in his buttonhole. Monsieur de Gromance murmured a few words of approval:

"Very nice indeed. Those are the words of a real leader, a true king.

"That is my feeling," said Joseph Lacrisse. "It is a pleasure to execute the orders of such a master."

"And the style is excellently concise," continued Monsieur de Gromance. "The Duc d'Orléans certainly seems to have inherited the secret of the Comte de Chambord's epistolary style. Of course you know, mesdames, that the Comte de Chambord wrote the most beautiful letters imaginable. A most able writer. That is really the truth. He excelled above all in letter-writing. There is a trace of his grand manner in the note which Monsieur Lacrisse

has just read to us. And the Duc d'Orléans has more enthusiasm; he has the fiery energy of youth. A fine figure of a man, a fine soldierly figure, and French to the backbone! He has a fascinating personality. I have been assured that in the working-class districts of Paris he is almost a popular favourite; he is known under the nickname of 'Gamelle.' *

"His cause has made great progress among the masses," said Lacrisse. "The little brooches with the King's head, of which we have distributed enormous quantities, are beginning to show themselves in the factories and workshops. The populace has more common sense than is commonly supposed. We are within reach of success."

In a benevolent and authoritative tone Monsieur de Gromance continued:

"With zeal, prudence and devotion such as yours, Monsieur Lacrisse, any hopes are permissible, and I am sure you will not have to sacrifice many victims in order to obtain success. Your opponents will flock over to you of their own accord."

His attitude as a supporter of the Republic, while not preventing him from expressing a desire for the restoration of the monarchy, did not permit him to express a too open approval of the violent methods which young Lacrisse had indicated at dessert.

* *Gamelle* might be roughly translated by "Matey."

Monsieur de Gromance, who went to balls given at the Prefecture and was carrying on a flirtation with Madame Worms-Clavelin, tactfully remained silent when the young secretary enlarged upon the necessity of doing for the "sheeny" prefect; but it was no breach of good taste on his part to praise the Prince's letter as it deserved, and to give them all to understand that he was ready for any sacrifice to save his country.

Monsieur de Terremondre was no less patriotic and no less appreciative of Philippe's epistolary style; but he was such an enthusiastic collector of curios and autographs that all he could think of was how he could get Lacrisse to give him the Prince's letter, either in exchange for something else or as a free gift or a so-called loan. By such methods he had got hold of several letters written by people mixed up in the Dreyfus affair and had formed an interesting collection. Now he was thinking of writing a pamphlet on the Monarchist Plot and putting in the Prince's letter as the principal feature. He realized that it would be difficult to obtain and his mind was full of the matter.

"Come and see me, Monsieur Lacrisse," he said. "Come and see me at Neuilly, where I shall be for the next few days. I will show you some interesting documents and we will speak again of that letter."

Madame de Gromance had listened with proper

attention to the King's epistle. She was a woman of the world, and too well versed in its ways not to know what was due to royalty. She had bowed her head on hearing the words of Philippe as she would have bowed to the King's carriage if she had had the honour of seeing it pass. But she was wanting in enthusiasm and had no feeling of veneration. She knew all about princes and had been as intimate as it is possible to be with a relation of the Duc d'Orléans. This had occurred in an unobtrusive little house in the Champs-Élysées district, one afternoon. They had said all that they had to say, and the occasion had not had a sequel. Monseigneur had been pleasant but not at all magnificent. Of course she felt honoured, but she had never regarded the honour as either very special or very extraordinary. She respected princes; occasionally she loved them; but she did not dream about them, and the letter left her quite unmoved. As for young Lacrisse, the sympathy which she felt for him was neither ardent nor tumultuous. She understood and approved of this fair-haired young man. He was small, slender and agreeable enough, though he was not rich. He was doing his very utmost to profit by the Affair and acquire importance. She, too, knew by experience that it is not easy to live in Society if one is poor. They were both working to keep their footing in Society. This was one

reason for a good understanding between them. They could help one another now and then. But that was all!

"I congratulate you, Monsieur Lacrisse," she said, "and you have my very best wishes."

How much more chivalrous and tender were the feelings of Baronne Jules! The gentle Viennese was interested heart and soul in this fashionable plot, of which the white carnation was the emblem. And she, too, was so fond of flowers! To be mixed up in an aristocratic plot in favour of the King was to her to enter into and luxuriate in the old French nobility, to be received in the most exclusive houses, and later on, perhaps, to go to Court. She was excited, pleased and agitated. Being affectionate rather than ambitious, her susceptible heart was touched by what she was pleased to consider the poetry of the Prince's letter. And the innocent woman spoke as she thought:

"Monsieur Lacrisse, that is a poetical letter."

"That is true," returned Lacrisse.

And a long look passed between them.

After this nothing further memorable was said as they sat in the summer's night before the flowers and candles of the little restaurant table.

The time came for them to go. As Monsieur Joseph Lacrisse placed her cloak round the Baronne's plump shoulders, she held out her hand

to Monsieur de Terremondre, who was saying good-bye. He was walking to Neuilly, where he was staying for the time being.

"It is quite near, only a quarter of a mile. I am sure, madame, that you don't know Neuilly. I have discovered, at Saint-James, the remnant of an old park, with a group by Lemoyne in a trellis-work arbour. I must show it to you some day."

And already his tall strongly-built figure was receding along the path that lay bathed in the blue moonlight.

The Baronne offered to give the Gromances a lift in the carriage which her brother Wallstein had sent for her from the club.

"Get in with me, there is plenty of room for three."

But the Gromances were people of discretion. They hailed a cab which had stopped outside the restaurant gates and got into it before she had time to stop them. She and Joseph Lacrisse were left standing alone by the open door of the carriage.

"Would you like a lift, Monsieur Lacrisse?"

"I am afraid I shall be in your way."

"Not in the least. Where shall I drop you?"

"At the Étoile."

They started along the blue road bordered by black foliage, in the silent night.

. . . . .

And the drive came to an end.

The Baronne asked as the carriage stopped, in the voice of one awakening from a dream:

"Where are we?"

"At the Étoile, alas!" replied Joseph Lacrisse.

And when he had left her, the Baronne, bowling along the Avenue Marceau, alone in the now chilly carriage, held a torn white carnation between her bare fingers. With half-closed eyes and parted lips, she still felt the eager yet gentle embrace which, pressing the royal letter against her bosom, had filled her with the sweetness of love and the pride of glory. She felt that this letter endowed her little private adventure with a national greatness and the majesty of the history of France.

CHAPTER XI

IN a house in the Rue de Berri, at the back of the courtyard, there was a little entresol which was lit by a trickle of daylight as dismal as the stone walls between which it found its difficult way. Henry de Brécé, son of the Duc Jean de Brécé, president of the Executive Committee, was seated at his desk with a sheet of paper before him on which he was turning a round blot of ink into a balloon, by the addition of netting, ropes and a car. On the wall behind him was nailed a large photograph of the Prince, looking extremely feeble in his vulgar solemnity and heavy-witted youth. Tricoloured flags spangled with *fleurs de lis* surrounded the portrait. In the corners of the room banners were displayed on which loyal ladies had embroidered golden lilies and royalist mottoes. At the back of the room several cavalry sabres were fixed to the wainscot, with a cardboard scroll bearing the inscription: *"Vive l'armée!"* Below them, held in place by pins, was a caricature of Joseph Reinach as a gorilla. A chest for papers, a strong box, a

couch and four chairs and a writing-desk in some black wood composed the furniture of this room, which looked both comfortable and business-like. Propagandist pamphlets were piled in heaps against the walls.

Joseph Lacrisse, secretary of the Departmental Committee of Young Royalists, was standing by the fireplace silently conning the list of affiliated members. Henri Léon, vice-president of the Royalist Committees of the South-West, was seated astride a chair, where, with stony gaze and knitted brows, he was unfolding his ideas. He was considered irrelevant and gloomy, a regular skeleton at the feast, but his inherited financial abilities made him of value to his associates. He was the son of that Léon-Léon, the banker of the Spanish Bourbons, who had come to grief in the smash of the *Union générale*.

"We are being hemmed in, I don't care what you say, we are being hemmed in, I feel it. Day by day the circle is closing upon us. When Méline was with us we had air and space, as much space as we wanted. We were free to do as we liked."

He jerked his elbows and moved his arms about as though to demonstrate the ease with which people manœuvred in those happy days which were no more. He continued:

"With Méline we had everything. We Royalists

held the Government, the army, the magistracy, the administrations and the police."

"We still have all that," said Henri de Brécé, "and public opinion is more than ever with us now that the Government is so unpopular."

"It's no longer the same thing. With Méline we were pseudo-official, we were supporters of the Government, we were Conservatives; the conditions were ideal for conspiracy. Don't make any mistake about that. France as a whole is conservative, and domestic and changes alarm her. Méline did us the enormous service of making us appear reassuring; we appeared to be kindly and benign, as benign as he himself appeared. He told the people that we were the true Republicans, and the people believed him. You had only to look into his face; you couldn't suspect him of a jest. Through him we were accepted by public opinion, and that in itself is no small service."

"Méline was a good sort," sighed Henri de Brécé, "We must at least do him that justice."

"He was a patriot," said Joseph Lacrisse.

"With such a minister," continued Henri Léon, "we had everything, we were everything and we could do everything. We had no need to conceal ourselves. We were not outside the Republic; we were above it, and we dominated it from the full height of our patriotism. We were everything; we

were France herself! I must admit that the Republic is good enough at times, though I'm not smitten with the hussy. Under Méline the police—I don't exaggerate—were exquisitely agreeable. During a Royalist demonstration which you very kindly organized, Brécé, I yelled *'Vive la police'* till I was hoarse! And I meant it. The enthusiasm with which they clubbed the Republicans! Gerault-Richard was put in gaol for shouting *'Vive la République!'* Ah, Méline spoiled us, made life too pleasant for us. A wet-nurse, positively! He rocked us to sleep. That's a fact. General Decuir himself used to say, 'Now that we've got all we can possibly want, what's 'the good of upsetting the whole caboodle and getting a nasty spill in doing it?' Thrice-happy days when Méline led the dance! Nationalists, Monarchists, anti-Semites and Plebiscitarians, we all danced in unison to the sound of his rustic fiddle.

"We were all countrified and content. When Dupuy came along I was less pleased; with him things were not so honest and above-board; we were not so sure of ourselves. Of course he didn't want to harm us, but he was not a true friend. He was not the kindly village fiddler leading the wedding procession. He was a fat coachman jogging us along in his cab. And we tore along, hanging on anyhow, always in danger of being upset. He had

a hard hand on the reins. You will be telling me that his clumsiness was feigned; yes, but feigned clumsiness is tremendously like the real thing. Besides, he never knew where he wanted to go. There are people like that, fellows who don't know your address but drive you indefinitely along impossible roads, winking maliciously as they do it. It unnerves one."

"I don't defend Dupuy," said Henri de Brécé.

"I don't attack him. I watch him, study him and classify him. I don't dislike him; he's been of great service to us. Don't forget it. If it were not for him, we should all be doing time to-day. Oh yes, I mean it. I'm referring to Faure's funeral, the great day fixed for simultaneous action. Well, my dear friends, after the failure of the great *coup* we should have been done for, had it not been for Dupuy."

"It wasn't us he wanted to spare," said Joseph Lacrisse, with his nose in his ledger.

"I know that. He saw at a glance that he couldn't do anything because there were some generals mixed up in the business. It was too big for him. But that doesn't alter the fact that we owe him a jolly big candle." *

* A reference to the practice of burning candles to induce the Virgin, or a Saint, to listen to a prayer, or in token of gratitude for a prayer granted.

"Bah!" said Henri de Brécé. "We should have been acquitted, like Déroulède."

"It's possible, but Dupuy allowed us plenty of time to pull ourselves together after the funeral stampede, and I confess I am grateful to him for that. On the other hand, without ill will, possibly without intending it, he has done us a great deal of harm. Suddenly, just when we least expected such a thing, he appeared to be furiously angry with us. He made out that he was defending the Republic. His position demanded the attitude; I recognize that. It wasn't a serious matter, but it had a bad effect. I get tired of telling you the same thing; that this country is conservative at heart. Unlike Méline, Dupuy did not tell people that we were the Republicans, that we were the Conservatives; for that matter, no one would have believed him if he had. During his ministry we lost something of our authority over the country. We were no longer on the side of the government. We were no longer reassuring; professional Republicans began to feel anxious about us. That was to our credit, but it was dangerous. Our position was not so good under Dupuy as under Méline, and it is worse today, under Waldeck-Rousseau, than it was under Dupuy. That's the truth, the bitter truth."

"Of course," said Henri de Brécé, pulling his moustache, "of course the Waldeck-Millerand Min-

istry is actuated by the worst intentions, but I repeat it's unpopular and it won't last."

"It may be unpopular," returned Henri Léon, "but are you quite sure it won't last long enough to do us harm? Unpopular governments last as long as popular ones. To begin with, no government is ever really popular. To govern is to displease. We are among ourselves and there is no need to mince matters. Do you for one moment imagine that we shall be popular when we form the government? Do you imagine, Brécé, that the people will weep with emotion when they see you attired as king's chamberlain with a key hanging down your back? And you, Lacrisse, do you suppose you'll be cheered in the working-class districts during a strike, when you are, say, prefect of police? Look at yourself in the glass and then tell me whether you look like an idol of the people. Don't let us deceive ourselves. We say that the Waldeck-Millerand Cabinet is composed of idiots; we are quite right to say so, but we should be wrong to believe it."

"What ought to encourage us," said Joseph Lacrisse, "is the weakness of a government which cannot enforce obedience."

"All our governments have been weak for many a long year," said Henri Léon, "but they have always been strong enough to defeat us."

"The Waldeck Ministry has not a single police-

commissary at its disposal," said Joseph Lacrisse. "Not one!"

"So much the better for us," said Henri Léon, "for one would be enough to jug all three of us. I tell you the circle is closing in. Consider these words of a philosopher; they are worth the trouble: 'Republicans govern badly, but they defend themselves well.' "

But Henri de Brécé, bending over his desk, was turning a second blot of ink into a beetle by the addition of a head, two antennæ and six legs. He gave a satisfied glance at his work, looked up and remarked:

"We still hold trump cards, the Army, the Church——"

Henri Léon interrupted him:

"The Army, the Church, the magistracy, the bourgeoisie, the butcher boys—in other words, the whole excursion train of the Republic. The train is travelling nevertheless, and will continue to do so until the driver stops the engine."

"Ah," sighed Joseph Lacrisse, "if only we had President Faure with us still."

"Félix Faure," resumed Henri Léon, "joined us out of sheer vanity. He became a Nationalist in order to get invitations to hunt with the Brécés, but he would have turned against us as soon as he saw us on the verge of success. It was not in his interest

to restore the monarchy. *Dame!* What could the monarchy have offered him? We could not have offered him a Lord High Constable's bâton. We may regret him, for he loved the army; we may mourn him, but we must not allow ourselves to be inconsolable. He was not the driver; Loubet is not the driver either; the President of the Republic, whoever he may be, is never master of his engine. To me the ghastly part of it is that the Republican train is controlled by a phantom driver. He is invisible, and yet the train rushes on. It positively frightens me.

"Then there is another thing," he continued, "and that is the general indifference of the public. Speaking of that, reminds me of a very significant remark once made by Citizen Bissolo. It was when the anti-Semites and ourselves were organizing spontaneous manifestations against Loubet. Our crowds went down the boulevards shouting 'Panama! Resign! Long live the Army!' It was magnificent. Young Ponthieu and General Decuir's two sons headed the crowd, with glossy silk hats, white carnations in their buttonholes, and gold-headed canes in their hands. And the toughest hooligans of Paris made up the procession. We had seen to that, and as it was a case of good pay and no risk we had our pick. They would have been sorry to miss

such a lark. Lord! what voices they had, and what fists, and what cudgels!

"A counter-manifestation quickly made its appearance; a smaller and more insignificant crowd, though warlike and determined enough, advanced to meet us amid shouts of 'Long live the Republic! Down with the priests!' with an occasional solitary cry for Loubet that seemed surprised to find itself in the air. Before it was over this unexpected disturbance aroused the anger of the police, who at that moment were barricading the boulevard and looking just like an austere border of black wool on a brightly variegated carpet. Soon, however, this black border, actuated by a movement of its own, hurled itself upon the van of the counter-manifestation, while another body of police harassed them from the rear. In this way the police had soon dispersed the partisans of Monsieur Loubet, dragging the unrecognizable débris off to the insidious depths of the Drouot police-station. That was the way they did things in those troublous times. Was Monsieur Loubet, at the Élysée, ignorant of the methods employed by his police for enforcing in the streets of Paris respect for the head of the State? Or, if he knew of them, was he unable and unwilling to alter them? I do not know. Did he realize that his unpopularity, real and undoubted as it was, was fading into insignificance, almost dis-

appearing in fact, before the strange and agreeable spectacle which was offered nightly to a witty and intelligent people? I do not think so, for in that case the man would have been a terrifying person; he would have been a genius, and I should no longer feel confident of sleeping outside the King's door at the Élysée this winter. No, I believe Loubet was once again so fortunate as to be unable to do anything. Anyhow, it is certain that the police, who acted spontaneously and solely out of the goodness of their hearts, succeeded, by their sympathetic repression, in shedding over the advent of the President a little of that popular rejoicing which had been totally lacking. In so doing, if one considers the matter, they did us more harm than good, for they pleased the public, while it was to our advantage that the general discontent should increase.

"However, one night, one of the last of that eventful week, when the expected manœuvre was taking place from point to point, and the counter-manifestation found itself attacked simultaneously in the van and in the rear by the police and in flank by us, I saw Bissolo extricate himself from the menaced van of the Republicans and, with long strides and a desperate wriggling of his little body, reach the corner of the Rue Drouot, where I was standing with a dozen or so roughs who in response to my orders were shouting 'Panama! Resign!' It was

a nice quiet little corner! I beat time, and my men pronounced each syllable with great distinctness —'Pa-na-ma!' It was really done with taste. Bissolo took refuge between my legs. He feared me far less than the police; and he was right. For two years Citizen Bissolo and I had met face to face in all our manifestations: we had headed the processions at the beginning and end of every meeting. We had exchanged every imaginable sort of political insult: 'Hypocrite! Time-server! Forger! Traitor! Assassin! Outcast!' That sort of thing binds people together and creates a mutual sympathy. Besides, it pleased me to see a Socialist, almost a Libertarian, standing up for Loubet, who is in his own fashion a Moderate. I said to myself: 'The President must hate being acclaimed by Bissolo, a dwarf with a voice of thunder, who at all public meetings demands the nationalization of capital. Bourgeois that he is, the President would surely prefer a bourgeois like myself for a supporter. But he can feel in his pockets.' Panama! Panama! Resign! Resign! Long live the Army! Down with the Jews! Long live the King!

"All this made me treat Bissolo with courtesy. I had only to say 'Hullo, here's Bissolo," and my dozen costers would promptly have cut him in pieces, but that wouldn't have done any good. I said nothing. We were very quiet; we stood be-

side one another and watched the march past of Joubet's supporters driven to the police-station in the Rue Drouot. Most of them, having previously been clubbed, staggered along beside the police like so many drunkards. Among them was a Socialist deputy, a very handsome man with a big beard; his sleeves had been torn off; there was a young apprentice sobbing and crying 'Mother! Mother!' and the editor of some trashy daily with two black eyes and his nose streaming with blood. And the *Marseillaise!* 'Qu'un sang impur.' . . . I noticed one man who was far more respectable and far more sorry for himself than the rest. He looked like a professor, a serious, middle-aged man. He had evidently made an attempt to explain his point of view; he had tried subtle and persuasive arguments on the police. Otherwise the way in which they were kicking him in the back with their hobnailed boots and banging him with their fists was quite inexplicable. And as he was very tall, very thin, anything but strong, and weighed very little, he skipped about under these blows in the most ridiculous fashion. He displayed a comical tendency to make his escape upwards. His bare head had a most pitiable appearance. He had that submerged expression which comes over a short-sighted man when he has lost his glasses. His face expressed the infinite distress

of a being whose only contact with the outside world comes through sturdy fists and hobnailed boots.

"As this unfortunate prisoner passed us, Bissolo, although he was on hostile territory, could not help sighing and saying: 'It is a strange thing that Republicans should be so treated in a Republic.' I politely replied that it was in truth somewhat amusing. "No, Citizen Monarchist," replied Bissolo, 'it is not amusing, it is sad. But that is not the chief misfortune. The chief misfortune, I tell you, is the lethargy of the public.' Bissolo spoke these words with a confidence that did us both honour. I glanced at the crowd, and it is a fact that it seemed to me flabby and without energy. Now and then a cry rose from its depths like a firework let off by a child: 'Down with Loubet! Down with the thieves! Down with the Jews! Long live the Army!' And it seemed friendly enough towards the worthy police, but there was no electricity in the air—no storm brewing. Citizen Bissolo continued with melancholy philosophy: 'The great evil is the lethargy of the public. We Republicans, Socialists and Libertarians are suffering from it to-day. You Monarchists and Imperialists will suffer from it to-morrow, and will learn in your turn that you may lead a horse to the water but you can't make him drink. Republicans are arrested and no one stirs a finger; and when it is the turn of the Royalists to

be arrested, no one will stir a finger, you may be sure of that. The crowd will not stir an inch to deliver you, Monsieur Henri Léon, or your friend Monsieur Déroulède.'

"I must admit that by the light of these words I seemed to catch a glimpse of a profoundly dismal future flashing across my vision. Somewhat ostentatiously, however, I replied: 'Citizen Bissolo, there is nevertheless this difference between you and ourselves—that the crowd looks upon you as a mob of time-servers without love for your country, while we Monarchists and Imperialists enjoy the esteem of the public. We are popular.' Citizen Bissolo smiled pleasantly at this and remarked: 'Your horse is there, monseigneur, and you have only to mount her. But when you are on her back she will quietly lie down by the side of the road and will pitch you off. There is no sorrier jade anywhere, I warn you. Tell me which one of her riders has not had his back broken by popularity? In time of peril have the people ever been able to offer the least assistance to their idols? You Nationalists are not so popular as you profess, you and your candidate Gamelle are almost unknown to the general public. But if ever the mob enfolds you in its loving embrace, you will very quickly discover its stupendous impotence and cowardice.'

"I could not refrain from reproaching Bissolo

severely for calumniating the French public. He replied that he was a sociologist, that his Socialism was based on science, and that he had a little box at home filled with actual facts minutely classified, which enabled him to bring about a methodical revolution. And he added: 'Science, and not the people, possesses sovereign power. A stupidity repeated by thirty-six millions of mouths does not for that reason cease to be stupid. Majorities, as a general rule, display a superior capacity for servitude. Among the weak, weakness is multiplied in proportion to number. Mobs are always inert. They possess a little energy only when they are starving. I can prove to you that on the morning of the 10th of August, 1792, the people of Paris were still Royalists. I have been addressing public meetings for ten years and have had my share of hard blows. The education of the people has hardly commenced; that is the fact of the matter. In the brain of the working man, in the palace where the bourgeois carry their inept and brutal prejudices, there is a great cavity. That has got to be filled. We shall do it. It will take a long time. In the meanwhile it is better to have an empty head than one filled with toads and serpents. All this is scientific fact; it's all in my box. It is all in accordance with the laws of evolution. Nevertheless the general poltroonery disgusts me. And in your place it would frighten me. Look

at your partisans, the defenders of the sword and the Church, did you ever see anything so flabby, so gelatinous?' Having spoken, he stretched out his arms, gave a wild cry of 'Long live Socialism!' plunged head foremost in the enormous crowd, and disappeared in the sea of people."

Joseph Lacrisse, who had listened without enthusiasm to this long story, asked whether Citizen Bissolo wasn't merely an animal.

"On the contrary, he is a very clever man," replied Henri Léon, "the sort of man one would like to have as a neighbour in the country, as Bismarck used to say of Lassalle. Bissolo spoke only too truly when he said that you may lead a horse to the water, but you can't make him drink."

CHAPTER XII

MADAME DE BONMONT conceived of love as an abyss of delight. After that dinner at the Madrid, glorified as it had been by the reading of the royal letter, she had said to Joseph Lacrisse as they returned from the Bois, while the carriage was still warm with an historic embrace: "This will be for ever!" and these words, meaningless as they will seem if we consider the impermanence of the elements which make up the substance of the erotic emotions, were none the less indicative of a proper spirituality and of longing for the infinite which conferred a certain distinction. "Quite!" had been the answer of Joseph Lacrisse.

Two weeks had passed since that happy night, two weeks during which the secretary of the Departmental Committee of Young Royalists had divided his time between the demands of his work and those of his love. Dressed in a tailor-made costume, her face covered with a white lace veil, the Baronne had come, at the appointed hour, to the first-floor flat of a discreet little house in the Rue Lord-Byron.

Here were three rooms which she had herself furnished with a heart full of tenderness, hanging them with that celestial blue which had formerly figured in her forgotten love-affair with Raoul Marcien.

She found Joseph Lacrisse well-mannered, proud and even a little shy. He was young and charming, but not exactly what she had wanted. He was gloomy and seemed uneasy. With his frowning brows and thin tightly-closed lips he would have reminded her of Rara, had she not possessed to the full the delightful faculty of forgetting the past. She knew that if he was anxious it was not without cause. She knew that he was a conspirator and that it fell to his share to hoodwink the prefect and the chief Republicans of a very populous department; and she knew that in this enterprise he was risking his liberty and his life for the sake of King and Church. It was precisely because he was a conspirator that she had first loved him. But now she would have liked him to be more cheerful and more affectionate. He welcomed her warmly enough, however, saying:

"It is an intoxication to see you! For the last fortnight I have positively been walking in a starry dream." And he had added: "How delicious you are!"

But he hardly looked at her, and at once went to the window, where he lifted a corner of the cur-

tain, and for ten minutes remained there peering through the opening.

Then, without turning round, he remarked:

"I told you that we ought to have two exits, and you wouldn't believe me. It's a good thing we are in front anyhow, but I can't see properly because of the tree."

"The acacia?" sighed the Baronne as she slowly untied her veil.

The house stood back from the road, facing a little courtyard, containing an acacia and a dozen spindle-trees, shut in by an ivy-covered railing.

"Yes, the acacia, if you like."

"What are you looking at, *mon ami?*"

"At a man stuck against the wall opposite."

"Who is he?"

"I don't know. I'm looking to see if he is one of my detectives. I'm fed up. Since I've been in Paris I've had two of them at my heels all day. It gets on one's nerves in the end. But this time I quite thought I'd managed to give them the slip."

"Couldn't you complain?"

"To whom?"

"I don't know—to the Government."

He made no reply, but stood for awhile still watching. Then, having made sure that it was not one of his pursuers, his countenance cleared and he came over to her.

"How I love you! You are lovelier than ever. You are, truly, and I adore you. But what if they had put different men on to me this time! It's Dupuy who put them on my track. A tall fellow and a short one. The tall one wore black glasses and the short one had a nose like a parrot's beak and little bright eyes like a bird's that were always glancing sideways. I knew them well. They weren't much to be feared. They were always after me. When I went to the Club my friends would tell me as they came in, 'Lacrisse, I've just seen your two fellows at the door.' I used to send them out beer and cigars. Sometimes I would ask myself if Dupuy did not set them on me to protect me. He was brusque and queer and irritable, but a patriot all the same. He wasn't a bit like the men in power to-day. With them you've got to be on your guard. What if they've changed my detectives, the brutes!"

He went to the window again.

"No, it's only a coachman smoking his pipe. I didn't notice his yellow-striped waistcoat. Fear distorts objects, that certain! I must confess I was afraid—on your account, as you may imagine. You must not be compromised through me, you who are so charming, so delicious!"

He sat beside her and took her in his arms, covering her with vehement caresses. Presently she found that her dress was in such disorder that mod-

esty alone, in the absence of any other motive, would have forced her to remove it.

"Elisabeth, tell me you love me."

"If I did not love you, it seems to me——"

"Do you hear that heavy, regular footfall in the street?"

"No, *mon ami.*

And it was true; plunged into a delicious oblivion she was not listening for sounds from the outer world.

"There's no doubt this time, it's he, my man, the little one, the bird. I know his step so well that I could pick it out among a thousand."

And he returned to the window.

These alarms set his nerves on edge. Since the failure of the 28th of February he had lost his admirable assurance and was beginning to anticipate a long and difficult affair. Most of his companions were growing discouraged and he himself suspicious. Everything irritated him.

And now she made an unfortunate remark:

"Don't forget, *mon ami,* that I've got you an invitation to dinner to-morrow at my brother's. It will be an opportunity of meeting."

His irritation burst forth:

"Your brother Wallstein! Ah, yes, let's talk of him! He's a true Jew if you like. This week Henri Léon told him about an interesting undertak-

ing, a propagandist newspaper which must be distributed gratuitously in large quantities throughout the country and in the manufacturing centres. He pretended not to understand what Léon was driving at and gave him advice—good advice! Does your brother imagine for a moment that it is his advice that we want?"

Elisabeth was an anti-Semite. She felt that she could not with decency defend her brother Wallstein, of Vienna, of whom she was exceedingly fond. She remained silent.

Lacrisse began to play with a small revolver which lay upon the table.

"If they attempt to arrest me here——" he said.

A fit of rage seized him. He cried out against the Jews, Protestants, Freemasons, Freethinkers, Parliamentarians, Republicans and Ministers. He would like to flog them in public, and bathe them in vitriol. He waxed eloquent and broke into the pious language of the *Croix*.

"The Jews and Freemasons are ruining France, ruining us, eating us up. But patience! Wait until after the Rennes trial, and then you will see how we will bleed them, split them up, smoke their hams, singe their hides and hang their heads in the pork-butchers' shops! Everything is ready. The movement will break out simultaneously in Rennes and in Paris. The Dreyfusards will be trampled in the

streets. Loubet will be roasted in the flames of the Élysée, and none too soon either."

Madame de Bonmont conceived of love as an abyss of delight. She did not hold it sufficient unto the day to forget the world once only in this room of sky-blue hangings. She sought to lead her lover back to gentler thoughts. So she said:

"What beautiful eyelashes you have!"

And she covered his eyelids with tiny kisses.

When she languidly opened her eyes again, languishing and recalling to her happy mind the infinity that had filled it for a moment, she noticed that Joseph was anxious and seemed far away from her, although she still held him with one of her soft, beautiful, supple arms. With a voice tender as a sigh, she asked him:

"What is the matter, *mon ami?* We were so happy just now."

"Of course we were," replied Joseph Lacrisse. "But I've just remembered three telegrams in cipher which have to be sent off before night. It is a complicated matter, and a dangerous one. We really thought for a moment that Dupuy had intercepted our telegrams on February 22nd. There was enough in them to jug the lot of us."

"But he did not intercept them, *mon ami?*"

"We must suppose not, as we were not molested. But I have my reasons for believing that for the

last fortnight the Government have had an eye on us, and until this wretched Republic is done for I shan't have a moment's peace."

Tender and radiant, she put her arms about his neck, like a scented garland of flowers, and gazing at him with her moist sapphire eyes she said, with a smile upon her fresh, ardent mouth:

"Do not be anxious, *mon ami.* Do not worry so. I am sure you will succeed. Their Republic is done for. How could it resist you? The people have had enough of Parliamentarians. They don't want any more of them, I'm certain. Nor of the Freemasons, and Freethinkers, and all those horrible godless people who have neither religion nor country. For one's country and one's religion are the same thing, aren't they? There is a wonderful spiritual impulse abroad. On Sunday, at Mass, the churches are full. And not only of women, as the Republicans would have us believe. There are gentlemen and officers. Believe me, *mon ami,* you will succeed. Besides, I will burn candles for you in St. Anthony's chapel."

"Yes, we shall make a move early in September," he replied, grave and thoughtful. "The public frame of mind is favourable. We have the good wishes and encouragement of the people. Oh, it is not sympathy we lack."

She imprudently inquired what they did lack.

"What we lack, or at any rate might lack, if things were not settled quickly, is the sinews of war—money, deuce take it! We get a good deal, of course, but we shall need so much. Three ladies in the best set gave us three hundred thousand francs. Monseigneur was much impressed by a generosity so truly French. Do you not think that there is something charming, exquisite, fragrant of the old France, the old aristocratic society, in the offering of these women to royalty?"

Madame de Bonmont, dressing in front of the glass, did not appear to have heard the question.

He explained his meaning:

"But they are trickling, trickling away, the three hundred thousand francs presented by those white hands. Monseigneur told us, with chivalrous grace: 'Spend the money to the last sou.' If some dainty little hand were to bring us another hundred thousand francs, how we should bless it! It would have helped to save France. There is still a place to be filled among the amazons of the cheque, in the squadron of fair Leaguers. I can safely promise to the fourth donor an autograph letter from the Prince and, what is more, a place at Court next winter."

But the Baronne, feeling that he was trying to bleed her, received a painful impression. This was not the first time, but she could not get used to it.

Besides, she did not see that it would be in any way useful to give her money for the restoration of the monarchy. Of course she liked the handsome young Prince with his rosy face and his fair silky beard. She wished ardently for his return; she was impatient to witness his entry into Paris, and his coronation. But, she argued, with his income of two millions he had no need of anything but love, good wishes and flowers. When Joseph Lacrisse had finished what he had to say the silence became painful.

"*Mon Dieu!* how awful my hair looks!" she muttered to the mirror.

When she had finished dressing, she took from her little purse a piece of four-leaved clover, enclosed in a glass medallion framed in silver gilt, and handing it to him whispered sentimentally:

"It will bring you luck. Promise to keep it always."

In order to divert the attention of any police-agents that might be on his track, Joseph Lacrisse was the first to leave the blue flat. As he reached the landing he muttered with a scowl:

"She's a regular Wallstein! It was no good *her* being baptized. What is bred in the bone will come out in the flesh!"

CHAPTER XIII

IN the warm luminous decline of day, the Luxembourg garden was as though bathed in a golden dust. Monsieur Bergeret sat on the terrace between Messieurs Denis and Goubin, at the foot of the statue of Marguerite d'Angoulême.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I should like to read you an article that appeared this morning in the *Figaro*. I shall not name the author, for I think you will recognize him for yourselves. Since chance will have it so, it gives me all the more pleasure to read it in the presence of this lovable woman who was a lover of sound doctrine and of open-hearted men, and who, because she was learned, sincere, tolerant and pitiful, and sought to deprive the torturers of their victims, raised against her all the monasteries and all the universities. They used even to incite the young scapegraces of the College of Navarre to insult her, and had she not been sister to the King of France they would have sewed her up in a sack and thrown her into the Seine. She was a gentle soul, profound yet cheerful. I cannot say whether

when alive she had the coquettish and mischievous expression which she wears in this statue by a little-known sculptor, by name Lescorné, but she certainly has not in the hard, sincere pencil drawings of Clouet's pupils, who have left us her portrait. I would rather believe that her smile was often veiled in sadness, and that her lips drooped sorrowfully when she said: 'I have borne more than my share of the burden common to all persons of high estate.' In her private life she was anything but happy, and all around her she saw the wicked triumph amid the applause of the cowardly and ignorant. I believe that in the days when her ears were not of marble she would have listened with sympathy to what I am about to read."

And Monsieur Bergeret, having unfolded his paper, read as follows:

"The Government.

"To see just where one stood in the Affair one needed, at the outset, some application, and a certain amount of critical method, together with sufficient leisure to apply it. So that we see that the light first dawned upon those who, by the quality of their minds and the nature of their occupation, were better adapted than others to the solution of difficult problems. After this, all that was needed was common sense and close attention. Common sense is enough to-day.

"We must not be surprised that the general public has held out so long against the obvious truth. Nothing should surprise us. There are reasons for everything, and it is our place to discover these reasons. In the present instance little reflection is needed in order to perceive that the public has been utterly and absolutely deceived, and its touching credulity abused. The Press has largely helped the lie to succeed. Most of the newspapers have hurried to the assistance of the forgers, and have published forged or falsified documents, insults and lies. But we must admit that in most cases this was done to please their public and respond to the private opinions of their readers. It is certain that the battle against truth was in the first place based on the popular instinct.

"The crowd, by which I mean the crowd of people who are incapable of thinking for themselves, did not understand; they could not understand. Their idea of the Army was a simple one. For them the Army was parade, march past, review, manœuvres, uniforms, high boots, spurs, epaulets, guns and flags. It also meant conscription, with beribboned caps, litres of cheap wine, barracks, drill, the mess, the guard-room and the canteen. It meant, again, a national trade in pictures, the brilliant little sketches of our military painters with their spotless uniforms and nice tidy battle scenes. And finally it was a symbol of strength and security, of honour and glory. The officers who rode past on horseback with their swords in their hands, amid the glitter of gold and steel, to the sound of music

and the roll of drums, how was it possible to believe that they would shortly be bending over a table, behind locked doors, *tête à tête* with anxious agents from the prefecture of police, handling the eraser and the india-rubber, handling the gum brush or sprinkling pounce, scratching out or putting in a name in a document, forging handwritings, to ruin an innocent man; or thinking out ridiculous disguises for mysterious appointments with the traitor they had to save?

"What made these crimes seem impossible to the public mind was that they did not smack of the open air, the early morning march, the field of manœuvres and the battle-field. They were all too stuffy, they savoured too much of the office; there was nothing military about them. And, in truth, all the practices which were resorted to in order to conceal the judicial error of 1895, all those infamous documents, all that vile and rascally trickery, reeks of the office, and a dirty office at that. All that the four green-papered walls, the china inkstand surrounded with sponge, the boxwood paper-knife, the water-bottle on the mantelpiece, the pigeon-holes, and the leather-seated chair could suggest in the way of ridiculous imaginings and evil thoughts to these stay-at-homes, these poor 'sitters' as a poet has called them, to vain, poor lazy, plotting scribblers, idle even in the accomplishment of their idle task, jealous of one another and proud of their occupation; all the equivocal, false, treacherous and stupid things that can be done with pen and paper in the service of wickedness and folly, came out of a corner of that

building on which are sculptured battle trophies and smoking hand-grenades.

"The jobs perpetrated in these offices during the space of four years, for the purpose of burdening a condemned prisoner with evidence which they had neglected to produce before his condemnation, and of acquitting the guilty man whom all accused, who inculpated himself, are so monstrous in their conception as to baffle the moderate mind of a Frenchman, and they exhale a spirit of tragic buffoonery most displeasing in a country whose literature abhors the confusion of styles. These documents and inquiries must be studied minutely before one can admit the reality of all these plots and intrigues, these prodigiously audacious tricks and inept manœuvres, and I can well understand that the careless, ill-informed public refused to believe in them even after they were divulged.

"And yet it is very true that at the end of a corridor in a Ministerial building, on thirty square yards of waxed flooring, a few military bureaucrats, some of them idle and crafty, others excited and unruly, betrayed justice and deceived a great people by their wicked, fraudulent documents. But if this Affair, which was above all the Affair of Mercier and the bureaux, has revealed a villainous morality, it has also raised up some noble characters.

"For even in this very office there was one man unlike the rest. His mind was broad, shrewd and lucid, his character noble, his heart patient, abundantly human and invincibly gentle. He was rightly looked upon as one of the most intelligent officers

in the Army. And although the singularity of a spirit of too rare an essence might have been a stumbling-block, he had been the first among the officers of his age to be appointed lieutenant-colonel, and everything foretold for him the most brilliant future in the Army. His friends understood his rather quizzical indulgence and his genuine kindliness. They knew him to be endowed with an unusual sense of beauty, apt to feel keenly all that was best in music and literature, and to live in the ethereal world of ideas. Like all men whose inner life is deep and meditative, he developed his great moral and intellectual faculties in solitude. This tendency to retire within himself, together with his natural simplicity, his spirit of renunciation and sacrifice, and the beautiful sincerity which sometimes seems to grace the minds of those most conscious of universal suffering and evil, combined to form in him the type of soldier known or dreamed of by Alfred de Vigny, the quiet hero of daily life who imparts some of his own nobility to the humblest tasks which he undertakes, and to whom the accomplishment of routine duty is the familiar poetry of life.

"This officer, who was appointed to the second committee of investigation, found one day that Dreyfus had been condemned for the crime of Esterhazy. He informed his superior officers. They tried, quietly at first, and then by threats, to put a stop to his investigations, which, in proving the innocence of Dreyfus, would reveal their own crimes and errors. He knew that it meant ruin if

he persevered. He persevered. With quiet reflection, slow and sure, with calm courage, he continued his work of justice. He was removed. He was sent to Gabès, and to the Tripoli frontier, on some wicked pretext, for no other reason than to get him murdered by the Arab brigands.

"Having failed to kill him, they set to work to dishonour him, to ruin him by the profusion of their slanders. With treacherous promises they tried to keep him from speaking at the Zola trial. He spoke, with the unruffled calm of the just man, with the serenity of a mind that knew neither fear nor desire. There was no exaggeration in his speech and no weakness; only the words of a man who was doing his duty on that day as on all other days, without thinking for a moment that there was a singular courage in the act. Neither threats nor persecution caused him to hesitate for a moment.

"Many have said that in order to accomplish the task which he had set himself, to establish the innocence of a Jew and the crime of a Christian, he had to get the better of clerical prejudices, to conquer a hatred of the Jews ingrained in him since his early youth, when he was growing to manhood in that land of Alsace and of France which gave him to the Army and the country. Those who know him best know that he heeded nothing of the kind, that he was incapable of any sort of fanaticism, that his ideals were never those of a sectary, that his great intelligence placed him above petty hatreds and partialities; in short, that his soul was free.

"This inward liberty, the most precious of all

liberties, his persecutors could not take from him. In the prison to which they sent him, whose stones, in the words of Fernand Gregh, formed the pedestal of his statue, he was free, freer than they. His wide reading, his calm, benevolent speech, and his letters, full of serene and noble thoughts, bear witness (I know) to the freedom of his soul. Those others, his persecutors and calumniators, were the real prisoners—the prisoners of their lies and their crimes. People who saw him behind the bolts and bars testify to the fact that he was quiet, smiling and indulgent. When the great mental revolution took place during which those public meetings that united thousands of scholars, students and working-men were organized, while petitions covered with signatures demanded an end to the scandal of his imprisonment, he said to Louis Havet, who went to see him: 'I am much more easy in my mind than you.' I think, however, that he suffered. I think he suffered intensely at the thought of so much baseness and treachery, of so monstrous an injustice, of that epidemic of crime and madness, of the execrable fury of the men who were deceiving the crowd, and the pardonable fury of the ignorant mob. He, too, saw the aged woman bearing with saintly simplicity the faggots for the torture of the innocent. How could he do other than suffer, when he found that men were worse than his philosophy had pictured them, less courageous and less intelligent when put to the test than the psychologists imagined in their quiet studies? I believe he suffered inwardly in the secret places of his silent

soul, veiled as by the Stoic's cloak. But I should be ashamed to pity him. I should be too much afraid lest that murmur of human pity should reach his ears and offend the rightful pride of his heart. Far from pitying him, rather will I say that he was happy; happy because on the sudden day of trial he was ready and without weakness; happy because unforeseen circumstances permitted him to give to the full measure of his great soul; happy that he proved himself to be an honest man, heroic in his simplicity; happy because he stands for ever as an example to soldiers and to citizens. Pity is for those who have failed. To Colonel Picquart we can offer nothing less than admiration."

Having come to an end of his reading, Monsieur Bergeret refolded his newspaper. The statue of Marguerite of Navarre was all rosy-pink. In the west the harshly brilliant sky clothed itself as with a suit of mail, a network of clouds like bars of red copper.

CHAPTER XIV

HAT same evening Monsieur Bergeret received in his study a visit from his colleague Jumage.

Alphonse Jumage and Lucien Bergeret were born on the same day, at the same hour, and were the children of two girl friends to whom, from that time, they became an inexhaustible source of conversation. They had grown up together. Lucien never troubled his head in any way concerning their simultaneous entry into the world, but Alphonse was more mindful of the fact, and dwelt upon it with some emphasis. He formed a mental habit of comparing the course of their two lives, which had started simultaneously, and he gradually persuaded himself that it was only just, equitable and salutary that their progress in life should be equal.

He took a great interest in the development of their twin careers, both of which were devoted to teaching, and, judging his own fortune by another's, he created for himself continual and futile anxieties which obscured the natural clearness of his vision.

The fact that Monsieur Bergeret was a professor at the University, while he himself taught grammar in a suburban *lycée* was not, to his mind, in conformity with the idea of divine justice engraven upon his heart. He was too fair-minded a man to bear a grudge against his friend; but when the latter was appointed lecturer at the Sorbonne Jumage felt it keenly.

A curious effect of this comparative study of their two lives was that Jumage formed an inveterate habit of thinking and acting, on every possible occasion, in a manner diametrically opposed to Monsieur Bergeret's way of thinking and acting; not that he had not a sincere and upright character, but he could not help suspecting that some malign influence was at work to ensure the success of careers which were of greater importance and merit than his own, and were therefore unrighteous. And thus, when he found that the professor was in favour of the Revision, he at once joined the ranks of the Nationals, because he conceived all manner of perfectly genuine reasons for doing so, and also because he had to be the antithesis, in a sense, the inverted self, of Monsieur Bergeret. He entered his name as a member of the League of the *Agitation française,* and even made speeches at its meetings. In the same way he opposed his friend on every topic under the sun, from systems of economical heating

to the rules of Latin Grammar, and as, after all, Monsieur Bergeret was not always wrong, Jumage was not always right.

This contrariety, which with years had assumed the exactitude of a rational system, did not in any way interfere with their life-long friendship. Jumage was really concerned at the misfortunes that dogged Bergeret in the course of his sometimes troubled career. He went to see him every time he heard of a fresh calamity. He was no fair-weather friend.

On this particular occasion, he came to his old friend with the worried and bewildered expression, the look of mingled pain and pleasure, that Lucien knew so well.

"You are quite well, Lucien? I'm not in your way, am I?"

"No. I was reading the story of the porter and the young girls in *The Arabian Nights*, newly translated by Dr. Mardrus. It is a literal translation and very different from *The Arabian Nights* of our old friend Galland."

"I came to see you," said Jumage, "because I wanted to speak to you about something. But it's of no consequence. So you were reading *The Arabian Nights?*"

"Yes," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "and for the first time too. For the worthy Galland gives one no idea of the real thing. He is an excellent story

teller who has carefully corrected the morals of the Arabs. His Scheherazada, like Coypel's Esther, has her value; but here we have Arabia with all its perfumes."

"I've brought you an article to read," continued Jumage. "But, as I said before, it's of no consequence."

And he drew from his pocket a newspaper which Monsieur Bergeret slowly extended his hand to take. Jumage replaced it in his pocket. Monsieur Bergeret's hand dropped to his side; then, with fingers that trembled slightly, Jumage spread the paper on the table.

"Again, I repeat, it's of no importance, but I thought it better—perhaps it's better for you to know—you have enemies, many enemies."

"Flatterer!" said Monsieur Bergeret.

And picking up the paper he read the following lines marked in blue pencil:

"A common usher and a Dreyfussard, the intellectual Bergeret, who has been stagnating in the provinces, has just been appointed lecturer at the Sorbonne. The students of the faculty of letters have lodged an energetic protest against the appointment of this anti-French Protestant, and it does not surprise us to hear that many of them have decided to greet as he deserves, with howls of execration, the dirty German Jew whom the Min-

ister of Treason has had the impudence to foist upon them as a teacher."

And when Monsieur Bergeret had finished reading, Jumage said eagerly:

"Don't read it, it's not worth it. It's so trivial."

"Trivial, I admit," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "Yet you must not deprive me of this token, obscure and insufficient, but at the same time truthful and creditable, of what I did during a difficult period. I didn't do a great deal; but I ran some risks. Stapfer, the Dean, was suspended for having spoken of justice during a funeral oration, in the days when Monsieur Bourgeois was Grand Master of the University. And we have known worse times than those for which Monsieur Bourgeois was responsible. If it hadn't been for the generous firmness of my chiefs I should have been turned out of the University by an unwise Minister. I didn't think about it then, but I can think of it now, and claim the reward of my actions. Now tell me what more worthy, what nobler, what more finely austere reward could I attain than the insults of the enemies of justice? I could wish that the writer who, despite himself, has given me this testimonial, had expressed his thought in a more memorable fashion. But that would be asking too much."

Having thus spoken, Monsieur Bergeret placed the blade of his ivory paper-knife between the pages

of *The Arabian Nights*. He enjoyed cutting the pages of his books, being a wise man who suited his pleasures to his condition. The austere Jumage envied him this innocent pastime. He pulled his sleeve.

"Listen, Lucien. I share none of your opinions with regard to the Affair. I have blamed and still blame your conduct. I fear it may have the most deplorable results upon your future. No true Frenchman will ever find it in his heart to forgive you. I should like to say, however, that I most forcibly disapprove of the style of controversy employed against you by certain newspapers. I condemn them. You believe that, do you not?"

"Yes."

After a moment's silence, Jumage went on:

"You see, Lucien, you are slandered because of your position. You can summon your slanderers before a jury. But I don't advise you to do so. They would be acquitted."

"That is most probable," said Monsieur Bergeret. "Unless I walk into court in a plumed hat, a sword at my side, spurs on my boots, and an army of twenty thousand paid hooligans at my heels. Then my plea would be heard by judge and jury. When Zola was found guilty by the jury of the Seine in respect of the very moderate letter which he addressed to a President of the Republic who was ill-

prepared to read it, their deliberations took place amid bestial cries, hideous threats, and unendurable clatter of ironmongery, amid all the phantoms of error and untruth. I have not so terrific an apparatus at my disposal, therefore it is more than probable that my defamer would be acquitted."

"You cannot, however, remain indifferent to insults. What do you intend to do?"

"Nothing. I am satisfied. I would just as soon be subjected to the insults of the Press as to its praise. Truth has been served in the newspapers by her enemies as well as by her friends. When a mere handful of men, mindful of the honour of France, denounced the fraudulent condemnation of an innocent man, the Government and public opinion treated them as enemies. But they spoke out. And by their speech they proved themselves the stronger. You know how fervently the majority of the newspapers worked against them. But in spite of themselves they were serving the cause of truth, and by publishing the false documents——"

"There haven't been so many false documents as you think, Lucien."

"They made it possible to prove their falsity. Error had been scattered broadcast, and could no longer collect her scattered forces, and finally nothing was left save that which had sequence and continuity. Truth has a faculty of linking facts

together which error does not possess. It formed, in the face of insult and impotent hatred, a chain that could not again be broken. We owe the triumph of our cause to the liberty, the licence of the Press."

"But you are not victorious," cried Jumage. "Neither are we defeated! Quite the contrary! The opinion of the whole country is against you. I regret to say it, but you and your friends are unanimously execrated, dishonoured, spat upon. We defeated? You are joking. The whole of France is with us."

"And you are defeated from within. If I took appearances into consideration I might think you victorious, and despair of justice. There are criminals who go unpunished. Prevarication and perjury are publicly approved as praiseworthy actions. I have no hope that the enemies of truth will own themselves vanquished. Such an effort is possible only to the highest type of mind.

"There is very little change in the general state of mind. The ignorance of the public is still almost complete. There have been none of those sudden changes of opinion on the part of the crowd which are so amazing when they occur. Nothing striking or even noticeable has happened. Nevertheless the time is past when a President of the Republic could degrade, to the level of his own soul, justice, the

honour of the country, and the alliances of the Republic, the power of whose ministers depended upon their understanding with the enemies of the very institutions of which they were the guardians. A season of brutal hypocrisy when contempt for intelligence and hatred of justice were at one and the same time a popular opinion and a State doctrine. A time when those in power upheld the rioters, when it was a crime to cry *'Vive la République!'* Those days are already remote, as though they had sunk into the limbo of the past and were plunged into the darkness of the age of barbarism.

"They may return. We are divided from them as yet by nothing tangible, nothing apparent or definite. They have faded away like the clouds of the error which created them, and the least breath may yet rekindle their ashes. But even if everything were to conspire to strengthen your cause, you are none the less irretrievably lost. You are conquered from within, and that is the irretrievable defeat. When you are conquered from without, you can continue to resist and hope for revenge. Your ruin is within you. The necessary consequences of your crimes and your errors are at hand in spite of your efforts to prevent them, and with amazement you see the beginning of your downfall. Unjust and violent, you will be destroyed by your own injustice and violence. And the monstrous party of unright-

eousness, hitherto inviolable, respected and feared, is falling, breaking asunder of its own weight.

"What does it matter then if legal sanctions are dilatory or lacking? The only true and natural justice is contained in the very consequences of the act, not in external formulæ, which are often narrow and sometimes arbitrary. Why complain that the greatest culprits evade the law and retain their despicable honours? That doesn't matter either, under the present social system, any more than it mattered, in the days of the earth's infancy, when the great saurians of the primeval oceans were disappearing to make way for creatures more beautiful and of happier instincts, that there still remained stranded, on the slime of the beaches, a few monstrous survivors of a doomed race."

. . . . .

As Jumage reached the gate of the Luxembourg after his visit to his friend, he met young Goubin.

"I've just been to see Bergeret," he said. "I'm sorry for him; he seems very cast-down and dejected. The Affair has crushed him."

CHAPTER XV

T the offices of the Executive Committee in the Rue de Berri, Henri de Brécé, Joseph Lacrisse and Henri Léon were dealing with the business of the day.

"My dear President," said Joseph Lacrisse to Henri de Brécé. "I want you to find a prefecture for a good Royalist. I am sure you will not refuse when I have told you of my candidate's qualification. His father, Ferdinand Dellion, an iron-master at Valcombe, is in every way deserving of the King's favour. He is most careful of the moral and physical well-being of his workmen. He has a dispensary for them, and he sees that they go to Mass on Sundays and send their children to the church schools, and that they vote properly and abstain from trade unions. He is opposed, unfortunately, by the deputy Cothard and ill-supported by the sub-prefect of Valcombe. His son Gustave is one of the most active and energetic members of my Departmental Committee. He was most vigorous in the campaign against the Jews in our

city, and was arrested at Auteuil for taking part in the demonstration against Loubet. You simply cannot refuse a prefecture to Gustave Dellion, my dear President!"

"A prefecture," murmured Brécé, turning over his register, "a prefecture? We've only got Guéret and Draguignan left. Will you have Guéret?"

Joseph Lacrisse smiled imperceptibly as he replied:

"My dear President, Gustave Dellion is my collaborator. When the time is ripe he will proceed under my orders to the forcible suppression of Worms-Clavelin. It is only fair that he should take his place."

With his eyes glued to the register, Henri de Brécé declared the thing to be impossible. Worms-Clavelin's successor was already chosen. Monseigneur had appointed Jacques de Cadde, one of the first to subscribe to the Henry subscription-lists.

Lacrisse objected to Jacques de Cadde, saying that he was a stranger to the department. Henri de Brécé retorted that one did not dispute the King's orders, and the discussion was growing somewhat heated when Henri Léon, astride a chair, put out his hand and remarked in a peremptory tone:

"Worms-Clavelin's successor will be neither Jacques de Cadde nor Gustave Dellion. It will be Worms-Clavelin."

Lacrisse and Brécé protested.

"It will be Worms-Clavelin," repeated Henri Léon. "Worms-Clavelin, who will not await your arrival on the scenes to fly the royal standards from the roof of the prefecture, and whom the Minister of the Interior appointed by the King will have notified by telephone of his retention at the head of the departmental administration."

"Worms-Clavelin prefect under the monarchy!" said Brécé disdainfully. "I don't seem to see him."

"It would be a shocking thing, of course," replied Henri Léon. "But if the Chevalier de Clavelin is appointed prefect there is nothing more to be said. Don't let us have any illusions, the King won't bestow all the plums on us. Ingratitude is the first duty of a sovereign, and no Bourbon has ever yet been found lacking in that respect. I say this to the praise of the House of France.

"Do you really think the King will govern with the white carnation, the cornflower and the rose of France, and take his ministers from the Jockey Club and from Puteaux, or make Christiani Grand Master of the Ceremonies? If so, you are vastly mistaken. The rose of France, the cornflower and the white carnation will be left on the ground, in the modest shade beloved of the violet. Christiani will be set at liberty, nothing more. People will look askance at him for staving in Loubet's hat. Of course!

Once deposed, Loubet, who at present is nothing but a low Panamist, will be a predecessor when we have replaced him. The King will sit in his armchair at the Auteuil races and he will then consider that Christiani created a regrettable precedent and will bear him a grudge for doing so. Even we ourselves, we who are plotting for him, will become suspect; conspirators are not liked at Court. I am telling you this to save you from bitter disappointment. The secret of happiness is to live without illusions. As far as I am concerned, if my services are forgotten or despised, I shall not complain. Politics isn't a matter of sentiment; I realize only too well what His Majesty will be forced to do when we have set him upon the throne of his fathers. Before rewarding gratuitous devotion, a good King pays for the services which have been sold to him. Don't make any mistake about that! The greatest honours and the most lucrative positions will be given to the Republicans. The trimmers alone will form a third of our political personnel, and will receive their pay before we do. And that is only fair. Gromance, the old Chouan who went over to the Republic under Méline, explains his position very clearly when he tells us: 'You have lost me a seat in the Senate, therefore you owe me one in the House of Peers.' He'll get it, and after all he deserves it. But the reward of the trimmers will

be as nothing to that of the faithful Republicans who reserve their treachery for the supreme moment. Those are they who will get the portfolios and gold-laced coats, the titles and endowments. Do you know where to look for our Premier and half our Peerage at the present moment? Don't look for them in our Royalist Committees where we hourly run the risk of being arrested like so many thieves, nor in the wandering Court of our young and handsome Prince in his cruel exile. You will find them in the ante-chambers of the Radical ministers, in the drawing-rooms of the Elysée and in every institution in the pay of the Government. Have you never heard of Talleyrand and Fouché? Have you read no history, not even the works of Monsieur Imbert de Saint-Amand? It was not an *émigré* but a regicide who was appointed Minister of the Police by Louis XVIII in 1815. Our young King is certainly not so clever as Louis XVIII, but we must not think him devoid of intelligence. That would be disrespectful and, perhaps, too severe. When he is King he will realize the necessities of the situation. All the chiefs of the Republican party who are not slain, exiled, transported or incorruptible will have to be regarded, otherwise they will oppose him in a great and powerful party, and Méline himself will become a savage enemy. And since I have mentioned Méline, Brécé, tell me yourself, which would

be most advantageous to the royal cause—that your father should preside over the peers, or Méline, Duc de Remiremont, Prince des Voges, with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour, Knight of the Lily and Saint Louis? There can be no possible doubt. Duc Méline would bring far more adherents to the crown than the Duc de Brécé. Must I, then, teach you the A B C of restorations?

"All we shall get will be the titles and positions rejected by the Republicans. Our gratuitous devotion will be taken for granted. They will have no fear of displeasing us; they will feel assured that we shall remain inoffensive malcontents. It will never for a moment enter their heads that we might form an Opposition.

"Well, they will be mistaken. We shall be obliged to oppose them, and we shall do so. It will be profitable, and it won't be difficult. Of course we shall not ally ourselves with the Republicans. That would be in execrable taste, and our loyalty would forbid such a thing. We cannot be less Royalist than the King, but we can be more so. Monsiegneur le Duc d'Orléans is no democrat, we must do him that justice. He does not interest himself in the conditions of the working-classes. He dates from before the Revolution. Nevertheless, although he dines in knee-breeches and a Breton waistcoat, with all his orders round his neck, he will turn Liberal

when his ministers are Liberals. There is nothing to prevent us from becoming 'Ultras.' We shall pull to the right while the Republicans pull to the left; we shall become dangerous and they will treat us properly. And who can say whether the 'Ultras' will not be the means of saving the monarchy? We have already an incomparable army to-day which is more religious than the clergy. We have an incomparable bourgeoisie, anti-Semites every one of them, who think as men thought in the Middle Ages. Louis XVIII was not so fortunate. If they will give me the post of Minister of the Interior, with such admirable elements as these I'll guarantee to make the monarchy last ten years. After that it will be the turn of Socialism. But ten years is a good lease of life."

Having thus spoken, Henri Léon lit a cigar. Still harping on the same theme, Joseph Lacrisse begged Henri de Brécé to see if he had not a good prefecture to dispose of; but the President repeated as before that he had nothing but Guéret and Draguignan.

"It will have to be Draguignan then," said Joseph Lacrisse with a sigh. "Gustave Dellion will not be best pleased, but I must make him see it's a foot in the stirrup."

CHAPTER XVI

HE Baronne de Bonmont had invited all the titled landowners and the big manufacturers and financiers of the district to a charity fête which she was giving on the 29th of the month, in the famous Château de Montil which Bernard de Paves, Grand Master of Artillery in the reign of Louis XII, had built in 1508 for Nicolette de Vaucelles, his fourth wife, and which had been bought by Baron Jules after the French loan of 1871. She had been tactful enough to send no invitation to the Jewish landowners, although she had friends and relations among them. After the death of her husband she was baptized, and had now been five years naturalized. She was wholly devoted to her religion and country. Like her brother Wallstein, of Vienna, she was careful to distinguish herself from her former co-religionists by a sincere anti-Semitism. She was quite unambitious, however, and her natural inclination was for the pleasures of domestic life. She would have been satisfied with a modest position among the

Christian aristocracy of France, if her son had not urged her to "make a splash." It was the little Baron Ernest who had induced her to get in with the Brécés; it was he who had inscribed the entire aristocracy of the province on the list of the guests invited to the projected fête. It was he who brought the little Duchesse de Mausac to Montil to take part in the play. As she was given to remarking, she was of good enough birth to sup with circus-riders and drink with grooms.

The programme of the fête included a performance of *Joconde* by society amateurs, a fair in the park, a Venetian fête on the lake, and illuminations.

It was already the 17th. The preparations were proceeding hurriedly, amidst extreme confusion. The little company of actors were rehearsing their play in the long Renaissance gallery, the panels of whose ceiling bore, in an ingenious variety of design, the peacock of Bernard de Paves tied by the foot to the lute of Nicolette de Vaucelles.

Monsieur Germaine was accompanying the singers on the piano, while in the park the carpenters were putting together the framework of the booths with great blows of their mallets. Largillière, from the Opéra-Comique, was acting as stage manager.

"Your turn, Duchess."

Monsieur Germaine's hands, stripped of their

rings, excepting one that remained on his thumb, struck a chord.

"La, la."

But, taking the glass handed her by young Bonmont, the Duchess cried:

"Let me drink my cocktail first."

When she had finished, Largillière repeated:

"Come, Duchess."

"Tout me seconde,
Je l'ai prévu. . . ."

And Monsieur Germaine's hands, despoiled of gold and gems save for an amethyst on the thumb, once more struck a chord. But the Duchess did not sing. She was staring with interest at the accompanist.

"My dear Germaine, I am lost in admiration! You *have* grown a bust and hips! I congratulate you! You've really done something! While as for me—look!" She drew her hands down over her cloth costume. "I've got rid of all that!" She made a half-turn. "Nothing left! It's all gone! And in the meantime you've been growing them! Now that's really funny! But there's no harm in it. One thing makes up for another."

But René Chartier, who was playing Joconde, was standing motionless with his neck extended like a stove-pipe, thinking only of the velvet and pearls

of his voice, which was deep and just a little gloomy. He grew impatient at last, remarking coldly:

"We shall never be in time; it's deplorable!"

"Let us start from the quartette," said Largillière.

"Tout me seconde,
Je l'ai prévu;
Pauvre Joconde!
Il est vaincu."

"Come along, Monsieur Quatrebarbe."

Monsieur Gérard Quatrebarbe was the son of the diocesan architect. Since he had broken the windows of Mayer, the bootmaker, who was supposed to be a Jew, he was received everywhere in society. He had a good voice but he missed his cues, and René Chartier cast furious glances at him.

"You are not in your place, Duchess," said Largillière.

"No, I dare say not!" replied the Duchess.

René Chartier went up to young Bonmont and whispered in his ear:

"For goodness' sake don't give the Duchess any more cocktails, she will spoil everything."

Largillière was grumbling too; the choruses were confused and unimpressive. However, they attacked the trio.

"Monsieur Lacrisse, you are not in your place."

Joseph Lacrisse was not in his place, and it is only fair to say that it was not his fault. Madame

de Bonmont was perpetually enticing him into corners and murmuring to him:

"Tell me you love me still; if you don't still love me I feel I shall die!"

She also asked him for news of the plot, and as the latter was not going on at all well the question irritated him. He was annoyed with her, too, because she had not given any money to the cause. He strode off stiffly to join the chorus, while René Chartier sang as though he meant it:

"Dans un délire extrême
On veut fuir ce qu'on aime."

Young Bonmont went up to his mother.

"Don't trust Lacrisse, mother."

She started. Then, in a tone of affected indifference:

"What do you mean? He is very serious, more serious than is usual at his age. He is occupied with important matters. He——"

The young Baron shrugged his strong crooked shoulders.

"I tell you, don't trust him. He wants to come down on you for a hundred thousand francs. He asked me to help to get the cheque out of you. But at the present time I don't see that it's necessary. I am for the King, but a hundred thousand francs is a large sum."

René Chartier sang:

"On devient infidèle,
On court de belle en belle."

A servant brought the Baronne a letter. It was from the Brécés, who enclosed a contribution to the charity and expressed their regrets that they would not be able to attend the fête, being obliged to go away before the 29th.

She handed the letter to her son, who smiled unpleasantly, and asked:

"What about the Courtrais?"

"They refused yesterday, and Madame Cartier de Chalmot as well."

"The cats!"

"We shall have the Terremondres and the Gromances."

"The deuce, it's part of their business to come to our house."

They reviewed the situation; it was unsatisfactory. Terremondre had not, as usual, promised to hunt up his cousins and his aunts and all the rest of the small gentry. The big manufacturers themselves seemed to be hesitating and seeking excuses for not coming. Young Bonmont concluded:

"It's all up with your fête, mother! We are in quarantine, that's very evident."

These words grieved the gentle Elisabeth. Her beautiful face, always adorned by a loving smile, seemed overcast.

At the other end of the room, above the confused babel of sounds, Largillière's voice reiterated:

"Not like that! That's not the way! We shall never be ready in time."

"Do you hear?" said the Baronne. "He says we shall not be ready in time. Suppose we postpone the fête if it's not going to be a success."

"You are soft, mother! But I'm not blaming you. It's your nature. You are a forget-me-not and will always remain one. I am a fighting man, a strong man. I'm pretty well played out, as far as my health goes, but—I shall struggle on to the end."

"My child!"

"Don't let that worry you. I'm done for, but I shall struggle on."

René Chartier's voice flowed forth like a limpid fountain:

"On pense, on pense encore
A celle qu'on adore,
Et l'on revient toujours
A ses premières a . . ."

Suddenly the accompanist ceased playing amidst a great uproar. Monsieur Germaine was chasing the Duchess who was running off with his rings. She fled into the monumental fireplace, where on the Angevin slate were engraven the loves of the

nymphs and the metamorphoses of the gods. Then, pointing to a little pocket in her corsage she said:

"Here are your rings, my old Germaine. Come and fetch them. Look here! Here's a pair of Louis XIII tongs! You can use them!"

And she jangled an enormous pair of tongs under the musician's nose. René Chartier, savagely rolling his eyes, threw down his score, saying that he returned his part.

"I don't believe the Luzancourts are coming either," said the Baronne, with a sigh.

"All is not lost. I have an idea," said the little Baron. "One must know how to make a sacrifice when it's useful. Say nothing to Lacrisse!"

"Nothing to Lacrisse?"

"Nothing that matters. Leave it to me."

He left her and approached the noisy chorus. To the Duchess, who asked him for another cocktail, he gently remarked:

"Don't bother me."

Then he sat down beside Joseph Lacrisse who was meditating apart, and spoke to him for some time in a low voice. His manner was serious and resolute.

"It's true enough," he said to the secretary of the Committee of Young Royalists. "We must overthrow the Republic and save France. And to do that we need money. My mother is of the

same opinion. She is prepared to pay fifty thousand francs to the King's account for expenses of propaganda."

Joseph Lacrisse thanked him in the King's name.

"Monseigneur," he said, "will be happy to learn that your mother adds her patriotic offering to that of the three French ladies who displayed such chivalrous generosity. You may be sure that he will express his gratitude in a letter written by his own hand."

"It's not worth speaking of," said young Bonmont.

And after a short silence he added:

"When you see the Brécés and the Courtrais, my dear Lacrisse, you might tell them to come to our little fête."

CHAPTER XVII

T was the first day of the New Year. Between two showers Monsieur Bergeret and his daughter Pauline wended their way along the streets still covered with fresh golden mud, to wish the compliments of the season to a maternal aunt of Monsieur Bergeret's who still survived, but lived alone, if living it could be called, in a little Beguine's cell which stood in a kitchen garden, amid the sound of convent bells. Pauline was happy without a reason simply because holidays such as these, which marked the flight of time, made her the more conscious of the delightful progress of her young life.

On this solemn day Monsieur Bergeret still observed his customary indulgence, no longer expecting much good from his fellow-creatures or from life itself, but knowing, like Monsieur Fagon, that one must forgive nature a great deal. All along the road beggars of every description, standing upright like candlesticks, or spread out like temporary altars, formed the decorations of this

social fête. They had all come to help to adorn the bourgeois quarters, all our poor unfortunates, lame, halt and blind; crooks, tramps, pickpockets, malingerers, rogues, and hardened ruffians. Yielding, however, to the general tendency to obliterate individual character, and to conform with the universal mediocrity of manners, they did not expose to view horrible malformations and ghastly sores as in the days of the great Coësre. They did not bind their mutilated limbs with blood-stained rags; they were modest and affected only endurable infirmities. One of them hobbled nimbly after Monsieur Bergeret for some considerable distance. Then he stopped and took up his position once more like a lamp-post on the edge of the pavement. After which Monsieur Bergeret remarked to his daughter:

"I have just committed a wicked action; I have given alms. In giving a couple of sous to Monsieur Hobbler I tasted the shameful joy of humiliating my fellow-man. I was a partner to the odious pact that gives power to the strong and leaves the weak in their weakness. I have sealed with my own seal the injustice of ages and contributed my share to depriving this man of one half of his soul."

"You've done all that, papa?" asked Pauline incredulously.

"Almost all that," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "I have sold fraternity to my brother Hobbler,

using false weights, and in humiliating him I have brought humiliation on myself, for almsgiving degrades both him who gives and him who takes. I have done wrong."

"I don't think so," said Pauline.

"You don't think so," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "because you have no philosophy and are incapable of tracing from an apparently innocent action the stupendous consequences which it bears within itself. This fellow induced me to offer him alms. I could not resist the importunity of his whining appeal. I pitied his bare thin neck, the knees of his trousers, which, baggy from too long wear, bear such a depressing resemblance to the knees of a camel, and his feet, on which his shoes were gaping at the toes like a couple of ducks. Seducer! Dangerous Hobbler! Through you my sous have produced their little share of baseness and shame. Through you I have created with ten centimes a little ugliness and evil. In handing you that tiny token of wealth and power, I have ironically made you a capitalist, and invited you, an unhonoured guest, to the banquet of society, the feast of civilization. And as I did it I felt that I was one of the mighty of this world as compared with you, a rich man compared with you, my gentle Hobbler, exquisite mendicant and flatterer. I rejoiced and was proud, exulting in my opulence and my great-

ness. O Hobbler, live for ever! *Pulcher hymnus divitiarum pauper immortalis.*

"An abominable practice, that of almsgiving! A barbarous pity, that of charity! An ancient error, that of the well-to-do who give a penny and think they are performing a good deed, who believe they have fulfilled their whole duty to their fellow-man by means of the most miserable, awkward, ridiculous, senseless and mean action which could possibly be committed with a view to a better distribution of wealth. This habit of almsgiving is contrary to beneficence and abhorrent to charity."

"Really?" said Pauline good-humouredly.

"Almsgiving," went on Monsieur Bergeret, "is no more to be compared to beneficence than a monkey's grimace to the smile of the Joconda. Beneficence is as ingenious as almsgiving is inept. It is vigilant, and proportions its efforts to the need. That is precisely what I did not do with regard to brother Hobbler. The very name of beneficence evoked the most beautiful ideas in the sensitive minds of the century of the philosophers. It used to be believed that the name was first created by the good Abbé de Saint Pierre, but it is older still, and can be found in the old Balzac. In the sixteenth century men said *bénéficence,* not *bienfaisance,* but it is the same word. I must admit that I do not find its pristine beauty in the word *bienfaisance;* for me

it has been spoiled by the Pharisees who have made too free a use of it. We have many charitable institutions in our country, pawn-shops, provident societies, mutual aid and insurance societies. Some of these are useful and do good service. But their common defect is that they proceed to aggravate the very social iniquity which they are intended to correct; they are poisonous remedies. Universal beneficence would have every one living by his own labours and not on the labours of others. Everything but fair exchange and solidarity is vile and shameful and unfruitful. Human charity is the co-operation of all in the production and division of the fruits of labour.

"Charity is justice; it is love, and the poor are more skilled in it than the rich. What rich man has ever practised human charity as fully as Epictetus or Benoît Malon? True charity is the gift of each man's work to all; it is a beautiful kindness; it is the harmonious gesture of the soul which bows itself like a vase of precious ointment, pouring forth its benefits. It is Michael Angelo painting the Sistine Chapel, or the deputies in the National Assembly on the night of the 4th of August. It is giving, in all its happy completeness; it is money poured forth together with love and thought. We have nothing that belongs to us alone but ourselves; we truly give only when we give our work, our minds, our genius.

And this splendid offering of one's whole self to all men enriches the giver as much as the community."

"But," objected Pauline, "you could not give love and beauty to Hobbler, so you gave him what was most convenient to him."

"It is true that Hobbler has become a mere animal. Of all the good things that gratify man, he cares only for alcohol. I conclude as much from the fact that as he came towards me he reeked of brandy. But, such as he is, he is our work. Our pride fathered and our sin mothered him; he is the evil fruit of our vices. Every man in the world should both give and receive. He has not given enough, doubtless because he has not received enough."

"He may be lazy," said Pauline. *"Mon Dieu,* how can we do away with poverty and weakness and idleness! Don't you believe that men are naturally good and that it is society that makes them wicked?"

"No, I don't believe that men are naturally good," replied Monsieur Bergeret. "What I see is that they are emerging painfully and very slowly from their primitive barbarism, and that with great effort they are organizing a justice that is uncertain and a charity that is precarious. The time is yet far distant when they will be kind and gentle to one

another. The time is yet far distant when they will not war upon one another, and when pictures representing battle scenes will be hidden away as affording an immoral and shameful spectacle. I believe that the reign of violence will last a long time yet, that for many years to come the nations will rend one another asunder for trivial reasons; that for many years to come the people of the same country will desperately snatch from one another the common necessaries of life, instead of equitably dividing them. But I also believe that men are least ferocious when they are least wretched, that in the long run the progress of industry will produce a certain softening of manners. A botanist has assured me that if a hawthorn be transplanted from a stony to a fruitful soil its thorns will change into flowers."

"There you are! You are an optimist, papa; I knew you were!" cried Pauline, stopping short for a moment in the middle of the pavement to gaze at her father with her dawn-grey eyes, full of gentle radiance and morning coolness. "You are an optimist. You are working with a cheerful heart to build the house of the future. That is good! It is a fine thing to build the New Republic with men of good will."

Monsieur Bergeret smiled at the hopeful words and youthful eyes.

"Yes," he said, "it would be fine to lay the foun-

dations for the new society, where each man would receive the just price of his labour."

"It will happen, won't it? But when?" asked Pauline innocently.

"Do not ask me to prophesy, my child," answered Monsieur Bergeret sadly and gently. "It is not without reason that the ancients considered the power of piercing the future as the most fatal gift that could be bestowed upon man. If it were possible for us to see what is to come, there would be nothing left for us but to die; or perhaps we should fall stricken to death by grief or terror. We must work at the future like weavers who work at their tapestries without seeing what they accomplish."

Thus conversing, the father and daughter proceeded on their way. In front of the square in the Rue de Sèvres they met a solitary beggar standing motionless on the pavement.

"I've no more change," said Monsieur Bergeret. "Can you lend me a couple of sous, Pauline? That outstretched hand bars my way. If it were in the Place de la Concorde it would still bar my way. The outstretched hand of a beggar is a barrier that I cannot pass. It is a weakness that I cannot overcome. Give the man something. It's pardonable. We must not let ourselves exaggerate the harm we do."

"Papa, I'd like to know what you will do with Hobbler in your Republic. You can't imagine he will live on the fruits of his labour?"

"My daughter," said Monsieur Bergeret, "I think he will consent to disappear. He is already greatly diminished. Idleness and a passion for rest are urging him toward final elimination. He will return to oblivion easily."

"I believe, on the other hand, that he thoroughly enjoys being alive."

"True, he has his joys. No doubt he delights in swallowing the vitriol of the dram-shop. He will disappear altogether with the last drinking house. There will be no publicans in my Republic, no buyers and no sellers, no rich and no poor, and each will enjoy the fruits of his labours."

"We all shall be happy, papa."

"No; for without suffering the sacred flame of pity which makes for the beauty of the soul would perish. But that will never be. Moral and physical evil, incessantly opposed, will share with happiness and delight the empire of the earth, as day will follow night. Evil is necessary; like good, it has its roots deep in human nature, and the one cannot perish without the other. Suffering is the twin sister of joy, and as they breathe upon the chords of our being they cause them to vibrate harmoniously. The breath of happiness alone would produce but a dull

and tedious sound, like silence. But the artificial ills arising out of social conditions will no longer be added to those that are inevitable, commonplace and august, which arise out of our human state. Men will no longer be deformed by iniquitous labours by which they die rather than live. The slave will come out of his cell and the factory will no longer devour the bodies of millions.

"And I anticipate that this delivery will come from machinery itself; the engine that has mangled so many men will come gently and generously to the aid of suffering human flesh. Cruel and hard to begin with, machinery will become kind, favourable and friendly. How can it change its soul? Listen. The spark that flashed from the Leyden jar, the little subtle star that revealed itself in the last century to the wonder-stricken philosopher, will accomplish this miracle. The Unknown which has allowed itself to be conquered without revealing its nature, the mysterious captive force, the intangible, seized by human hands, the obedient lightning, bottled and distributed over the innumerable wires that cover the face of the earth with their network—electricity will yield up its energy, will give its help wherever it is needed: in the houses, the rooms, the homes where father, mother, and children will henceforth never be separated. This is no dream. The cruel machine that crushes soul and body in the factory

will become domestic, intimate and familiar. But it is useless, quite useless for the pulleys, wheels, connecting-rods, cranks, bearings and flywheels to become humanized if men themselves remain iron-hearted.

"We are waiting for and appealing to a yet more wonderful change. The day will come when the employer, growing in moral beauty, will become a worker among the liberated workers; when there will be no more wages, but only an exchange in kind. The great manufacturers, like the old nobility, whose place they have taken and whom they are imitating, will go through their 4th of August. They will abandon their disputed profits and threatened privileges. They will become generous when they feel that it is time to be so.

"What says the employer of to-day? That he is the mind and the thought, and that without him his army of workers would be like a body deprived of understanding. Well, if that be true, let him content himself with so much joy and honour. Because a man is thought and soul must he therefore gorge himself with riches? When the great Donatello and his companions designed a bronze statue it was he who was the soul of the creation. He placed the price paid for the work by the prince and the citizens in a basket which hung from a pulley fixed to one of the rafters of the studio, and each of his

companions untied the rope and took from the basket what he needed. Is not the joy of creative intelligence enough, and does such an advantage exempt the master worker from sharing the gain with his humble collaborators? But in my Republic there will be no gain, no wages, and all will belong to each."

"Papa, that's collectivism," said Pauline quietly.

"The most precious gifts," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "are common to all men and have always been so. Air and light are the common property of all that breathes and sees the light of day. After the secular labours of egoism and avarice, in spite of the violent efforts of individuals to seize and keep wealth, the individual possessions enjoyed by the wealthiest among us are little when compared with those that belong without distinction to mankind in general. And even in our society do you not notice that the most beautiful and splendid possessions, such as roads, rivers, forests, which were once royal, libraries and museums, belong to all? Not a single rich man has a greater claim than I to an old oak-tree at Fontainebleau or a picture in the Louvre. And they are more mine than the rich man's if I can appreciate them better. Collective property, dreaded like some remote monster, is already among us in a thousand familiar forms. When prophesied, it alarms, in spite of the fact

that we already enjoy many of the advantages which it affords.

"The Positivists who meet in the house of Auguste Comte, under the leadership of the venerable Monsieur Pierre Laffitte, are in no hurry to become Socialists. But one of them made the judicious remark that all property springs from a social source. Nothing could be truer, for all property acquired by individual effort was created, and subsists, only by the co-operation of the whole community. And since private property springs from a social source we neither forget its origin nor corrupt its essence if we offer it to the community and entrust it to the State upon which it necessarily depends. And what is the State?"

Mademoiselle Bergeret hastened to answer that question:

"The State, papa, is a wretched cross-grained person sitting behind a counter-rail. You must see that no one will want to strip himself naked for such as he."

"I understand," said Monsieur Bergeret with a smile. "I have always tried to understand, and in so doing I have wasted much precious energy. I am discovering late in life that not to understand is a great faculty. It sometimes helps you to the conquest of the world. If Napoleon had been as intelligent as Spinoza he would have lived in a garret and

written four books. I understand. But to return to this wretched cross-grained man behind the counter-rail, you trust your letters to him, Pauline, letters that you would not trust to the Tricoche Agency. He manages a portion of your property, not the least in extent or in value. He looks gloomy to you, but when he becomes everything he will cease to be anything, or rather he will only be ourselves. Annihilated by his universality, he will cease to appear tiresome. One is no longer wicked, my daughter, when one ceases to exist. What makes him unpleasant to-day is that he encroaches on individual property, that he goes along filing and scratching, taking a little bite from the fat and a big bite from the thin. That makes him unbearable. He is greedy; he is needy. In my Republic he will be without desires, like the gods. He will have all and nothing. We shall not notice him because he will be like ourselves, indistinguishable from ourselves; will be as though he didn't exist. And when you say that I sacrifice the individual to the State, the living man to an abstraction, I am, on the contrary, subordinating the abstraction to reality, to the State which I suppress, by identifying it with the activities of the whole social organism.

"Even were my Republic never to exist I should be glad that I had played with this idea of it. It is permissible to build in Utopia. And Au-

guste Comte himself, who flattered himself that he built only on the data of positive science, placed Campanella in the calendar of great men.

"The dreams of philosophers have in all ages raised up men of action who have set to work to realize those dreams. Our thought creates the future. Statesmen work on the plans which we leave behind us. No, my child, I am not building in Utopia. My dream, which in no way belongs to me, but is, at this very moment, the dream of thousands upon thousands of souls, is true and prophetic. All societies whose organs no longer correspond to the functions for which they were created, and whose members are not recompensed according to the useful work which they accomplish, die. Deep-rooted disturbances and inward disorder precede and proclaim their end.

"Feudal society was strongly constituted. When the clergy ceased to represent learning, and the nobility to defend the labourer and artisan by the sword, and these two orders became merely swollen and dangerous members, the whole body perished. An unexpected and necessary revolution carried off the patriot. Who can maintain that in modern society the organs correspond with their functions and that all the members are nourished in proportion to the useful work which they perform? Who can maintain that there is a fair distribution of wealth?

Who, I say, can believe in the permanence of unrighteousness?"

"And how can we put an end to it, papa? How can we change the world?"

"By the force of speech, my child. Nothing is more powerful than speech. The linking of powerful arguments and noble thoughts forms a chain that nothing can break. Speech, like the sling of David, lays low the violent and causes the mighty to fall. It is an invincible weapon, without which the world would belong to armed brutes. What keeps them in abeyance? Merely thought, naked and weaponless.

"I shall not see the new State. All changes in the social order, as in the natural order, are slow and almost imperceptible. A geologist of profound understanding, Charles Lyell by name, demonstrated that those fearful traces of the glacial period, those monstrous rocks carried into the valleys, the flora and the furry beasts of cold countries succeeding to the flora and fauna of hot countries, those apparent tokens of cataclysmic upheaval, were in reality only the effect of prolonged and multiple action, and that those great changes, produced with the merciful deliberation of natural forces, were not even suspected by the innumerable generations of living creatures that existed during their accomplishment. Social transformations operate in the same way,

insensibly and incessantly. The timid man fears, as he would a future cataclysm, a change which began before he was born, which is going on before his unconscious eyes, and which will become noticeable only in a century's time."

CHAPTER XVIII

MONSIEUR FELIX PANNETON was sauntering up the Champs-Élysées on his way to the Arc de Triomphe, calculating the chances of his election to the Senate. His candidature had not yet been announced. And Monsieur Panneton reflected, like Bonaparte: "To act, to calculate, to act . . ." Two lists had already been offered to the electors of the department. The four retiring Senators, Laprat-Teulet, Goby, Mannequin and Ledru, were presenting themselves for re-election. The Nationalist candidates were the Comte de Brécé, Colonel Despautères, Monsieur Lerond the ex-magistrate, and Lafolie the butcher.

It was difficult to say which of the two lists would win the day. The retiring Senators found favour in the eyes of the peace-lovers because of their long experience of legislation, and because they were guardians of those liberal yet authoritative traditions which dated back to the foundation of the Republic and were connected with the legendary name of Gambetta. They won the public favour by intelli-

gently-rendered services and abundant promises, and they had a large and well-disciplined body of supporters. These public men, who had lived in stirring times, remained faithful to their doctrine with a firmness that embellished the sacrifices which circumstances forced them to make to the exigencies of public opinion. Opportunists in former days, they now called themselves Radicals. At the time of the Affair they had all four testified to their profound respect for the court-martial, and in one of them this respect was mingled with genuine emotion.

The ex-attorney Goby could never speak of military justice without shedding tears. The oldest of them, Laprat-Teulet, a Republican who had taken part in the great conflicts of the heroic days, spoke of the Army in such loving and impassioned terms that, at any other period, his hearers would have judged his expressions more applicable to some poor orphan girl than to an institution so strong in men and in millions. These four Senators had voted for the law of deprivation and had expressed to the General Council the pious hope that the Government would take stringent measures to check the Revisionist agitation. These were the Dreyfusards of the department, and as there were no others they were furiously opposed by the Nationalists. They blamed Mannequin for being the brother-in-law of a councillor in the Court of Appeal. As for Laprat-

Teulet, who headed the list, he was greeted with insults and venomous abuse that bespattered them all. Truth to tell, he had done a stroke or two of business on his own account. People recalled the time when, finding himself mixed up in the Panama affair and threatened with arrest, he had grown a long beard that gave him a venerable appearance and was wheeled about in a little chair by his pious wife and his daughter, the latter dressed as a nun. Every day, as part of this humble and saintly procession, he would pass by beneath the elm-trees of the Mall and have himself put in the sun, a poor paralytic who traced figures in the dust with the tip of his walking-stick, while with cunning skill he prepared his defence, which a verdict of "insufficient cause" had rendered useless. Since then he had recovered, but the fury of the Nationalists was hot against him. He was a Panamist, so they called him a Dreyfusard. "This man," said Ledru to himself, "will ruin the whole lot of us." He mentioned his apprehensions to Worms-Clavelin:

"Would it not be possible, monsieur le préfet, to make Laprat-Teulet, a man who has rendered such signal service to the Republic and the country, understand that the time has come for him to retire into private life?"

The prefect replied that they must think twice before decapitating the Republican list.

However, the newspaper *La Croix*, introduced into the department by Madame Worms-Clavelin, carried on a ferocious campaign against the retiring Senators. It supported the Republican list, which was cleverly constructed. Monsieur de Brécé rallied the Royalists, who were fairly strong in the department; Monsieur Lerond, as ex-magistrate and a clerical advocate, was favoured by the clergy; and Colonel Despautères, in himself an unimportant old man, represented the honour of the Army. He had praised the forgers and was among the subscribers to the fund for the widow of Colonel Henry. The butcher Lafolie pleased the working-people, who were half peasants, living on the outskirts of the town. It was believed that the Brécé list would obtain more than two hundred votes and that it might go right through. Monsieur Worms-Clavelin was uneasy, and when *La Croix* published the manifesto of the Nationalist candidates he became extremely anxious. It attacked the President of the Republic, called the Senate a poultry-run and a pigsty, and referred to the Cabinet as the "Ministry of Treason." "If these fellows get in, I'm done," thought the prefect, and he remarked gently to his wife:

"You were wrong, my dear, to favour the diffusion of *La Croix* in the department."

"What else could I do?" she replied. "As a

Jewess, I was obliged to exaggerate my Catholic opinions. And up to now that has helped us a good deal."

"True," replied the prefect; "but we have perhaps gone a little too far."

Monsieur Lacarelle, secretary to the prefecture, whose famous resemblance to Vercingetorix inclined him to Nationalism, spoke in favour of the Brécé list, and Monsieur Worms-Clavelin, a prey to gloomy meditation, forgot his cigars and left them, with chewed ends and still alight, on the arms of the chairs.

Just at this time Monsieur Felix Panneton called to see him.

Monsieur Felix Panneton, the younger brother of Monsieur Panneton de La Barge, was an army contractor. No one could suspect his love of the Army whose heads and feet he covered. He was a Nationalist, but a Government-Nationalist. He was a Nationalist with Monsieur Loubet and Monsieur Waldeck-Rousseau. He did not disguise the fact, and when he was told that such a thing was impossible he replied:

"It isn't impossible; it isn't even difficult; the main thing was the idea."

Panneton the Nationalist remained loyal to the Government. "There is plenty of time to change," he thought, "and all those who broke too soon with

the Government have had cause to regret it. One is too apt to forget that even a prostrate Ministry has time to deal you a kick and break your jaw." Such wisdom was the fruit of his common sense. He was ambitious, but did his best to satisfy his ambition without sacrificing his business or his pleasures, which were pictures and women. For the rest, he was a very energetic person, always running to and fro between his factories and Paris, where he had three or four addresses.

The idea of worming his way in between the Radicals and the pure Nationalists having dawned upon him one day, he went to see Monsieur Worms-Clavelin.

"The proposition I am about to make to you, monsieur le préfet, cannot but be agreeable to you. I therefore feel certain beforehand of your consent," he said. "You are anxious for the success of the Laprat-Teulet list. It is your duty to be so. I respect your feelings in the matter, but I cannot second them. You are afraid of the success of the Brécé list. Nothing more legitimate. In this connection I may be useful to you. I am forming, with three of my friends, a list of Nationalist candidates. The department is Nationalist but it is moderate. My programme will be Nationalist and Republican. I shall have the clergy against me, but the bishops will be on my side. Do not contest my

claim. Observe a benevolent neutrality toward me. I shall not take many votes from the Laprat list, but, on the other hand, I shall take a great many from the Brécé list. I will not disguise the fact that I quite expect to go through on the third scrutiny. But this will be to your advantage as well, because the extremists will be left in the cart."

"Monsieur Panneton," replied Monsieur Worms-Clavelin, "you have long been assured of my personal sympathies. I thank you for the interesting communication which you have been kind enough to make. I will think it over and act in conformity with the interest of the Republican Party, endeavouring meanwhile to fathom the intentions of the Government."

He offered Monsieur Panneton a cigar and in a friendly way asked him if he had not just come from Paris, and what he thought of the new piece at the Variétés. He asked this question because he knew that Panneton was keeping one of the actresses there. Felix Panneton was supposed to be a great lover of women. He was a big, ugly man of fifty, dark and bald, with high shoulders and a reputation for wit.

Some days after his interview with Worms-Clavelin, he was walking up the Champs-Élysées thinking of his candidature, which augured fairly well, and of the importance of making a start as

soon as possible. But just at the moment of publishing the list, which he headed, one of the candidates, Monsieur de Terremondre, had backed out. Monsieur de Terremondre was too moderate to separate himself from the extremists. Hearing their cries redoubled, he had gone back to them. "Just what I expected," thought Panneton. "It doesn't much matter. I will put Gromance in Terremondre's place. Gromance will do the trick, Gromance the landed proprietor—and every acre that he possesses mortgaged. But that will do him no harm except in his own district. He is in Paris. I'll go and see him."

He had reached this point in his reflections when he saw Madame de Gromance coming towards him in a mink coat that came down to her feet. Even under the thick fur she was still slim and dainty. He found her delicious.

"I am delighted to see you, dear lady. How is Monsieur de Gromance?"

"Oh—quite well."

When people asked her for news of her husband she was always afraid of their doing so in an ill-bred spirit of irony.

"May I walk a little way with you, madame? I want to discuss some serious matters with you. First——"

"Well?"

"That coat gives you a barbaric appearance, you look like a charming little savage."

"Are these the serious matters?"

"I'm coming to them. It is absolutely necessary for Monsieur de Gromance to present himself as a candidate for the Senate. The interests of his country demand it. Monsieur de Gromance is a Nationalist, is he not?"

She looked at him with a touch of indignation.

"He certainly isn't an Intellectual."

"And is he a Republican?"

"Heavens, yes! I'll explain. He's a Royalist. So you understand——"

"Ah, dear lady, those are the best Republicans. We will put the name of Monsieur de Gromance prominently upon our list of Republican Nationalists."

"And do you think that Dieudonné will get in?"

"Madame, I think so. We have the bishops with us and many senatorial electors who, although Nationalists by conviction, uphold the Government on account of their office or their interests. And in the event of failure, which could only be an honourable failure, Monsieur de Gromance can rely on the gratitude of the Government and the Administration. I'll tell you a great secret. Worms-Clavelin is on our side."

"Then I don't see why Dieudonné——"

"Are you quite sure your husband will accept?"

"Go and see him yourself."

"You are the only person with any influence over him."

"Do you think so?"

"I am quite sure of it."

"Then it's settled."

"No, it isn't settled. There are very delicate details which we can't settle like this in the street. Come and see me and I will show you my Baudouins. Come to-morrow."

He whispered the address, the number of a house in a dull deserted street in the Quartier de l'Europe. There, at a respectable distance from his lawful and spacious domicile in the Champs-Élysées, he had a small house, built in former days for a fashionable painter.

"Is there any special hurry?"

"I should say so. Just think, my dear madame, we have only three weeks left for our electoral campaign and Brécé has been working the department for six months."

"But is it quite necessary that I should come and see your——?"

"My Baudouins? It is indispensable."

"Is it really?"

"Listen and judge for yourself, dear lady. I do not deny that your husband's name has a certain

prestige among the rural population, especially in the parts where he is little known. But I cannot disguise the fact that when I proposed to add his name to our list I met with opposition. This opposition still exists. You must give me strength to overcome it. I must draw from your—your friendship the irresistible will to—— In short, I feel that if you do not give me your sympathy I shall not have the necessary energy to——"

"But is it quite proper for me to go and see your——?"

"Oh, in Paris!"

"If I do, of course it will be for the sake of the country and the Army. We must save France."

"That is my opinion."

"Remember me to Madame Panneton."

"I will not forget, dear madame. Until to-morrow."

CHAPTER XIX

IN Monsieur Felix Panneton's little house there was a large room which had formerly been used as a studio by the fashionable painter, and which the new inmate had furnished with the magnificence of a great collector of curios and the discretion of an accomplished lover of women. Artistically and in methodical order Monsieur Panneton had strewn the room with couches, sofas and divans of all shapes and kinds.

Looking from right to left as you went in, you would first of all notice a little blue silk settee the arms of which, shaped like a swan's neck, reminded one of the time when Bonaparte in Paris, like Tiberius of old in Rome, was bent on improving the manners and customs of society. Then came another rather bigger couch upholstered in Beauvais cloth with tapestry-covered ends; then a settee in three divisions, covered in silk; then a little wooden settee *à la capucine* with a covering of Turkish tapestry; then a large sofa of gilded wood upholstered in crimson figured velvet with cushions

of the same, which had belonged to Mademoiselle Damours; then a broad, low, luxuriously stuffed divan of flame-coloured silk; and finally a tottering mass of soft cushions on a very low Oriental divan which, bathed in a dim rose-coloured light, stood on the left near the Baudouin room.

As she entered the room, each charming visitor could thus take in with a glance the varied seats and choose the one that best suited her moral character and her present state of mind. Panneton, from the first, observed his new friends, noticed their expressions, took some trouble to discover their tastes, and was careful to ensure that they should sit only where they wished to sit. The more chaste of his lady friends went straight to the little blue settee, placing a gloved hand on the swan's neck. There was also a high straight-backed arm-chair of gilded wood and Genoa velvet, the former throne of a Duchess of Modena and Parma; that was for the haughty beauties. The Parisian ladies seated themselves calmly on the Beauvais couch; the foreign princesses generally preferred one of the two sofas. Thanks to the judicious arrangement of these aids to conversation, Panneton knew at a glance what he had to do. He was in a position to observe all the conventions, careful not to attempt too sudden a transition in the necessary succession of his attitudes, and was able to spare both his visitor and himself those long

and useless pauses between the preliminary courtesies and the inspection of the Baudouins. His proceedings thereby gained a certainty and a mastery which did him honour.

Madame de Gromance gave immediate proof of a tact for which Panneton was grateful. Without so much as a glance at the throne of Parma and Modena, and leaving on the right the Napoleonic swan's neck, she sat on the flowered Beauvais sofa like a Parisienne. Clotilde had languished among the smaller landed gentry of the department and had had attentions paid to her by some rather underbred young men; but the meaning of life was dawning upon her. She had racked her brains over money matters and was beginning to understand what social duty entailed. She did not dislike Panneton excessively. Partially bald, with very black hair brushed smoothly over his temples, and large prominent eyes, he looked like a lovesick apoplectic, and made her feel rather inclined to laugh, satisfying that craving for the comic element in love of which she had always been conscious. No doubt she would have preferred a magnificent young man, but she was inclined to facile gaiety and the sort of amusement which a man derives from jokes of a rather highly salted nature and a certain kind of ugliness. After a moment of very natural shyness she felt that it would not be so terrible, nor even very tedious.

Everything went well. The transit from the Beauvais to the settee and from the settee to the big sofa took place with all due decorum. They judged it needless to linger on the Oriental cushions and went straight into the Baudouin room.

When Clotilde thought of looking at it the room, like the erotic painter's pictures, was strewn with women's garments and fine linen.

"Ah, there are the Baudouins, you have two of them."

"Just so."

He had the *Jardinier galant* and the *Carquois épuisé,* two little water-colours for which he had paid 60,000 francs apiece at the Godard sale, and which cost him considerably more than that because of the use to which he put them. Calm once more, and a little melancholy even, he gazed with the eye of a connoisseur at the slender, graceful, supple figure of the woman before him, and, finding her beautiful, was conscious of a little feeling of pride, which grew as she gradually reassumed her social characteristics together with her garments.

She demanded the list of candidates.

"Panneton, manufacturer; Dieudonné de Gromance, landed proprietor; Dr. Fornerol; Mulot, explorer."

"Mulot?"

"Young Mulot. He was running up bills in Paris,

so his father sent him round the world. Désiré Mulot, explorer. That sounds well, an explorer candidate! The electors hope he will open up new fields for their goods. Above all, they feel flattered."

Madame de Gromance was becoming serious. She wanted to hear the address to the senatorial electors. He outlined it and repeated some parts which he knew by heart.

"First, we promise general pacification. Brécé and the pure Nationalists have not sufficiently insisted on pacification. Then we absolutely demolish the nameless party."

She asked what the nameless party was.

"For us it's the party of our adversaries; for our adversaries it is ourselves. There can be no mistake about that. We demolish the traitors, the creatures who have sold themselves. We fight against the power of gold—that is useful for the poor ruined aristocracy. Enemies of all reaction, we repudiate political adventure. France is resolved on peace, but the day when she draws the sword from the scabbard, etc. The country that regards with pride and affection her admirable national Army— I shall have to alter that sentence a little."

"Why?"

"Because it is in both the other addresses, word for word; the Nationalists have it and so have the enemies of the Army."

"And you promise me that Dieudonné will get in."

"Dieudonné or Goby."

"What! Dieudonné or Goby? If you were not any surer than that you ought to have told me. Dieudonné or Goby! To hear you one would think it was all one which got in."

"It isn't all one, but in either case Brécé goes under."

"Brécé is one of our friends, you know."

"And one of mine! In either case, as I said before, Brécé and his list will go under, and having contributed to his downfall the prefect and the Government will be under obligations to Monsieur de Gromance. After the elections, no matter how they result, you will come and see my Baudouins again and I will make of your husband—whatever you will."

"An ambassador."

At the scrutiny of the 28th of January, the list of Nationalist candidates, Comte de Brécé, Colonel Despautères, Lerond, ex-magistrate, Lafolie, butcher, obtained an average of about a hundred votes. The Progressive Republicans, Felix Panneton, manufacturer, Dieudonné de Gromance, landed proprietor, Mulot, explorer, and Dr. Fornerol, obtained an average of a hundred and thirty votes. Laprat-

Teulet, implicated in the Panama affair, only succeeded in obtaining a hundred and twenty votes. The other three retiring Senators obtained an average of two hundred votes.

At the second scrutiny Laprat-Teulet's votes fell to sixty.

At the third scrutiny Goby, Mannequin and Ledru, the three retiring Radical Senators, and Felix Panneton, Republican Progressive, were elected.

CHAPTER XX

OOK at the scene before you," said Monsieur Bergeret to his disciple Monsieur Goubin, who was polishing his eyeglass, as they stood on the steps of the Trocadero. "Look at the domes, minarets, spires, belfries, towers and pediments; the roofs of thatch, slate, glass, tile, wood, hide and coloured earthenware; the Italian and Moorish terraces, the palaces, temples, pagodas, kiosks, huts, hovels, and tents; the fountains and fire-works; the harmony and contrast of all these human habitations, the marvels of workmanship, the wonderful playthings of industry, the prodigious diversions of modern genius, which has brought together in this spot the arts and crafts of the whole world."

"Do you think," queried Monsieur Goubin, "that France will derive any profit from this huge Exhibition?"

"She may reap great advantages from it," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "provided it does not fill her with a barren and hostile pride. All this is only

the decoration and envelope, it is the study of what it contains that will give us the opportunity of considering more minutely the exchange and circulation of products, their consumption at fair prices, the increase of work and wages and the emancipation of the worker. And do you not admire, Monsieur Goubin, one of the first kind offices of the Universal Exhibition, in scaring away Jean Coq and Jean Mouton? Where are they now? You neither see nor hear them nowadays, and formerly one saw nothing else. Jean Coq led the way, with his head high, his calves prominent. Jean Mouton followed him, fat and curly-headed. The whole city re-echoed to the sound of their cock-a-doodle-doo and baa-baa-baa, for they were eloquent. One day this winter I overheard Jean Coq say, 'We must have a war. This Government has made it inevitable by its cowardice!' And Jean Mouton replied: 'I'd rather have a naval war.' 'Of course,' said Jean Coq, 'a sea-fight would be consistent with the enthusiasm of the Nationalists. But why not have war on land as well as on sea? Who's to stop us?' 'No one,' replied Jean Coq. 'I should like to see anyone try to stop us! But we must first exterminate all traitors and spies, all Jews and Freemasons. That is essential.' 'That's just what I think,' replied Jean Mouton. 'And I will not go to war until our land has been cleared of all her enemies.'

"Jean Coq is hot-headed, Jean Mouton mild and peaceful, but they both know only too well how to whet the national energies not to attempt by every means in their power to assure to their country the benefits of war at home and abroad.

"Jean Coq and Jean Mouton are Republicans. Jean Coq votes at every election for the Imperialist candidate, and Jean Mouton for the Royalist, but they are both of them Republican Plebiscitarians, and can imagine nothing better for the consolidation of their chosen Government than to deliver it over to the hazards of an obscure and disorderly suffrage; in which they show themselves to be clever fellows. For it is, of course, a profitable thing, if you have a house, to stake it at dice against a truss of hay, because by so doing you run the chance of winning your own house, which of course would be a great advantage.

"Jean Coq is not pious, neither is Jean Mouton a clerical, although he is no Freethinker, but they venerate and cherish the monks who grow rich by the sale of miracles and who publish seditious, insulting and slanderous newspapers. And you know as well as I do how such people abound in this country of ours and how they prey upon it.

"Jean Coq and Jean Mouton are patriots. You think you, too, are a patriot, and I know that you are attached to your country by the tender and

invincible ties of sentiment and reason. You are mistaken, however, and if it be your wish to live at peace with the world you are in league with the enemy. Jean Coq and Jean Mouton will prove that by falling upon you with their cudgels to the war-cry of 'France for the French!' 'France for the French!' is the slogan of Jean Coq and Jean Mouton, and as it is evident that these words exactly describe the position of a great nation in the midst of other nations, and express the necessary conditions of life, the universal law of exchange, the commerce of ideas and of products, just as they contain a great economical doctrine and a profound philosophy, Jean Coq and Jean Mouton have made up their minds to shut out all foreigners in order to keep France for the French, thus, by a stroke of genius, extending to human beings the system which Monsieur Méline applied only to the products of agriculture and industry, for the greater profit of a small number of landed proprietors. And this idea of Jean Coq's, of closing the country to men of other nations, enforces, by its modest beauty, the admiration of quite a host of small middle-class people and coffee-house keepers.

"Jean Coq and Jean Mouton are not evil; they are only the innocent enemies of the human species. Jean Coq is the more ardent, Jean Mouton the more melancholy, but they are simple fellows both, and

believe what their newspapers tell them. This throws a dazzling light upon their innocence, for it is not easy to believe what their newspapers tell them. I take you all to witness, all you famous impostors, you forgers of all time; you egregious liars, distinguished tricksters, notorious creators of fictitious errors and illusions; you whose time-honoured frauds have enriched literature, sacred and profane, by so many dubious volumes; authors of apocryphal Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Syrian and Chaldean writings which have so long deceived learned and ignorant alike; you, false Pythagoras, false Hermes-Trismegistus, false Sanchoniathon, fallacious editors of the Orphic poems and the Sibylline books; false Enoch, false Esdras, pseudo-Clement and pseudo-Timothy; and you lord abbots who, to assure yourselves of the possession of your lands and privileges, forged in the reign of Louis IX the charters of Clotaire and Dagobert; and you, doctors of canon law, who based the pretensions of the Holy See on a heap of sacred decretals composed by yourselves; and you, wholesale manufacturers of historical memoirs: Soulavie, Courchamps, Touchard-Lafosse, lying Weber, lying Bourrienne; you, sham executioners and sham police-agents, who wrote the sordid memoirs of Samson and Monsieur Claude; and you, Vrain-Lucas, who with your own hand traced a letter said to be written by Mary

Magdalene, and a note from the hand of Vercingetorix, I call you all to witness; and you whose whole life was a work of simulation; lying Smerdis, lying Neros, lying Maids of Orleans, who would have deceived the very brothers of Joan of Arc; lying Martin Guerre, lying Demetrius and fictitious Dukes of Normandy; I call you to witness, workers of spells, makers of miracles that seduced the mob: Simon the Magician, Apollonius of Tyana, Cagliostro, Comte de Saint-Germain; I call you to witness, travellers returning from far-off countries, who had every facility for lying and took full advantage of it; you who beheld the Cyclopes and the Læstrygones, the Magnetic Mountain, the Roc and the Fish-Bishop; and you, Sir John Maundeville, who saw in Asia devils vomiting fire; and you, makers of stories and fables and tales—Mother Goose, Tyl Eulenspiegel, Baron Munchausen!—and you, chivalrous and picturesque Spaniards, most notable babblers, I call you to witness! Bear witness, all of you! You have not accumulated, in the long course of the centuries, so many lies as Jean Coq and Jean Mouton read in their newspapers in a single day! And after that, how can we be surprised that they have so many bogies in their heads!"

CHAPTER XXI

INDING himself implicated in the proceedings instituted against the authors of the plot against the Republic, Joseph Lacrisse put his person and his papers in a safe place. The police commissary whose duty it was to seize the correspondence of the Royalist Committee was too much of a gentleman not to give the members of the Committee due notice of his visit. He gave them twenty-four hours' warning, thus bringing his natural courtesy into line with his legitimate anxiety to do his duty properly, for in common with the majority he believed that the Republican Ministry would soon be overthrown, and that a Ribot or Méline Cabinet would take its place. When he appeared at the headquarters of the Committee all the drawers and pigeon-holes were empty. They were sealed by the magistrate. He also sealed a Bottin for 1897, an automobile catalogue, a packet of cigarettes and a fancing glove which were found on the mantelpiece. In this manner he obeyed the legal formalities, on which we must congratulate him;

one should always observe the legal formalities. His name was Jonquille. He was a distinguished magistrate and a clever man; in his youth he had composed songs for cafés-concerts. One of his works, *Les Cancrelats dans le pain,* achieved a great success at the Champs-Élysées in 1885.

After the surprise caused by these unexpected proceedings, Joseph Lacrisse reassured himself. He soon saw that the conspirators under the present Government run less risk than under the First Empire or the Monarchy, and that the Third Republic is by no means bloodthirsty. Madame de Bonmont alone looked upon him as a victim, loving him the more for it, for she was generous. She showed her love by tears and sobs and fits of nerves, so that he spent a never-to-be-forgotten fortnight with her in Brussels. This was the extent of his exile. He benefited by one of the first verdicts pronounced by the Supreme Court. I do not complain of this, and if it had listened to me the Supreme Court would have condemned no one. Since they dared not prosecute all the offenders, it was not in very good taste to condemn only those of whom they were least afraid; to condemn them, moreover, for actions that were not, or at any rate did not seem, sufficiently distinguished from the actions for which they had already been prosecuted. Again, that the only persons implicated in an Army plot should have been civilians

might well appear strange. To all of which some excellent people have replied: "People must do the best they can for themselves." Joseph Lacrisse had lost none of his energy. He was ready to mend the broken threads of the plot, but that was soon recognized to be impossible, although the majority of the police commissaries who had received search warrants would have treated the Royalists with the same delicacy as Monsieur Jonquille. The irony of chance or the imprudence of the conspirators placed in their hands, in spite of themselves, enough documentary evidence to reveal the secret organization of the Committees to the Attorney-General of the Republic. They could no longer plot in safety, and had lost all hope of seeing the King return with the swallows.

Madame de Bonmont sold the six white horses she had bought with the intention of offering them to the Prince for his entry into Paris by the Avenue des Champs-Élysées. At the instigation of her brother Wallstein she sold them to Monsieur Gilbert, the director of the National Circus at the Trocadero. Nor had she the anguish of selling them at a loss; she even made a little profit on them. But the tears fell from her beautiful eyes when the six lily-white chargers left her stables, never to return. She felt as though they were harnessed to the funeral car of that Royalty whom they were to have drawn in triumph.

However, the Supreme Court, which had investigated the affair with languid curiosity, was still sitting.

One day at Madame de Bonmont's house young Lacrisse permitted himself the natural satisfaction of cursing the jury that had acquitted him while still retaining some of the accused men in custody.

"What bandits they are!" he cried.

"Ah," sighed Madame de Bonmont, "the Senate is in the pay of the Ministry. It is a frightful Government. Monsieur Méline would never have undertaken this abominable prosecution. He was a Republican, but he was an honest man. Had he remained in power, the King would be in France to-day."

"Alas, the King is far away from France to-day," said Henri Léon, who had never had many illusions.

Joseph Lacrisse shook his head, and a long silence ensued.

"It's perhaps a good thing for you," said Henri Léon.

"How so?"

"I say that in a way it is rather to your advantage, Lacrisse, that the King is in exile. You ought to be delighted, allowing, of course, for your patriotic feelings."

"I don't understand."

"It's very simple. If you were a financier like

myself, the return of the Monarchy might have been profitable to you, if it were only for the Coronation loan. The King would have raised a loan shortly after his accession, for the dear man would have needed money to reign with. There would have been a good deal to be made out of the business for me; but what would you, an advocate, have gained by the Restoration? A prefecture? A lot of good that would be! You can do better than that as a Royalist under the Republic. You speak exceedingly well—don't deny it—you speak with facility, gracefully. You are one of the twenty-five or thirty members of the junior bar whom Nationalism has brought into prominence. You can believe me. I'm not saying it to flatter you. A good speaker has everything to gain by keeping the King out of the country. With Philippe at the Élysée you would be given some post in the Government or Administration, and that sort of thing quickly does for a man. If you take up the people's interests you displease the King, and out you go. If you devote yourself to the King's interests the people complain, and the King dismisses you. He makes mistakes, and you make them, but you are punished for both; popular or unpopular, you are done for inevitably. But as long as the King is in exile you can do no wrong. You can do nothing; you have no responsibility! It is an excellent state of affairs. You need fear neither

popularity nor unpopularity, you are above the one and the other. You cannot blunder; no blunder is possible to the defender of a lost cause. The advocate of misfortune is always eloquent. When hope has become impossible, you can be a Royalist with impunity in a Republic. You offer a calm opposition to those in power; you are liberal; you have the sympathy of all enemies of the existing system, and the respect of the Government which you harmlessly oppose. As a servant of the fallen Monarchy the veneration with which you kneel at the feet of your King will emphasize the nobility of your character, and without loss of dignity you can lavish upon him every sort of flattery. In the same way you can, without any inconvenience, read the Prince a lesson, speak to him with brusque frankness, reproach him for his abdications, his alliances, his private counsellors; you can say to him, for example: 'Monseigneur, I must warn you, with due respect, that you are keeping low company.' The papers will seize upon these noble words; the fame of your devotion will increase, and you will dominate your own party from the lofty altitudes in which your soul is able to breathe. Advocate or Deputy, at the Palais or from the tribune, you will strike the noblest of attitudes; you are incorruptible, and the good Fathers will protect you. Come, realize your good fortune, Lacrisse."

"What you say may be funny, Léon," replied Lacrisse coldly, "but I don't find it so. And I doubt whether your jokes are at all relevant."

"I am not joking."

"Yes, you are. You are a sceptic, and I loathe scepticism. It is the negation of action. I am all for action, always, and in spite of all."

Henri Léon protested:

"I assure you I am very much in earnest."

"Well then, my friend, I am sorry to tell you that you don't in the least understand the spirit of your age. You have described a worthy of the type of Berryer. He would seem like a man stepped out of a family portrait. Your Royalist might have passed muster under the Second Empire, but I can assure you that to-day he would appear *vieux jeu* and devilishly out of date. The faithful courtier would be simply absurd in the twentieth century. One has no business to be beaten, and the weak are always in the wrong. That is the way we look at things, my dear fellow. Are we for Poland, or Greece, or Finland? No, no; we don't dance to that tune. We are not simpletons. We shouted 'Vivent les Boers,' it's true. But we knew what we were about. We wanted to worry the Government by stirring up trouble with England, and also we hoped that the Boers would win. However, I'm not discouraged. I have reason

to hope that we shall overthrow the Republic with the help of the Republicans.

"What we can't do alone we shall do with Nationalists of every shade of opinion. With them we'll make an end of the Republic. And to begin with we must bring off the municipal elections."

CHAPTER XXII

OSEPH LACRISSE had spoken the truth when he called himself a man of action. Idleness was a burden to him. The Secretary of an extinct Royalist Committee, he became a member of a Nationalist Committee, which was very much alive. It was violent in tone, full of a malevolent love of France and a destructive patriotism. It was continually organizing rather savage demonstrations in the theatres or the churches. Joseph Lacrisse was the moving spirit of these demonstrations. When they took place in a church, Madame de Bonmont, who was religiously inclined, attended them, dressed in dark colours. *Domus mea domus orationis.* One day after joining the Nationalists in the Cathedral in order to pray in select company, Madame de Bonmont and Lacrisse mingled with a crowd of men in the square before the Cathedral who were expressing their patriotism by frantic and concerted shouts. Lacrisse joined his voice to that of the crowd, and Madame de Bonmont quickened

their courage by the smile of her blue eyes and her rosy lips, gleaming behind her veil.

The noise was magnificent and formidable, and it was growing even louder when, on an order from the prefecture, a squad of police marched upon the demonstrators. Lacrisse watched them approaching without surprise, and as soon as they were within hearing he shouted, "Hurrah for the police!"

This enthusiasm was not lacking in prudence, and it was also sincere. Bonds of friendship had been formed between the brigades of the prefecture and the Nationalist demonstrators in the ever-to-be-regretted times, if I may say so, of the ploughman Minister who allowed cudgel-bearing roughs to club the silent Republicans in the streets. That is what he called acting with moderation. O gentle country customs! O primitive simplicity! O happy days! Who knew you not never knew the meaning of life! O simplicity of the man of the open fields, who vowed that the Republic had no enemies! Where were the Royalist conspirators and seditious monks? There were none. He had hidden them all under his long Sunday-go-to-meeting coat. Joseph Lacrisse had not forgotten those happy days, and relying on the old alliance of rioters and police he cheered the black brigades. Standing in the front rank of the Leaguers he waved his hat on the end of his stick in token of peace, shouting twenty times over,

"Hurrah for the police!" But times had changed. Indifferent to this friendly welcome, deaf to these flattering shouts, the police charged. The shock was violent. The Nationalist ranks wavered and fell back. Human affairs are subject to time's revenges. Lacrisse, who had stopped cheering the attackers and had replaced his hat on his head, found it knocked over his eyes by a vigorous blow. Indignant at the insult he broke his stick over a policeman's head, and had it not been for the efforts of friends who came to his assistance he would have been marched off to the police station and thrown into a cell like a Socialist.

The policeman whose head was cracked was taken to the hospital, where he received a silver medal from the prefect of police.

Joseph Lacrisse was chosen by the Nationalist Committee for the ward of the Grandes-Écuries as their candidate at the municipal elections of the 6th of May.

This was the former Committee of Monsieur Collinard, a Conservative who had been blackballed at the preceding elections, and was not standing on this occasion. The president of the Committee, Monsieur Bonnaud, a pork-butcher, undertook to assure Joseph Lacrisse of a triumphant return.

Raimondin, a Radical Republican, the retiring councillor, wished to be re-elected, but the electors

had lost their faith in him. He had disappointed every one, and had neglected the interests of his ward. He had not even obtained the tramway which had been demanded for the last twelve years, and was even accused of favouring the Dreyfusards.

It was an excellent ward. The householders were all Nationalists, and the tradespeople severely condemned the Waldeck-Millerand Cabinet. There were some Jews among them, but they were anti-Semites. The religious communities, which were both rich and numerous, would do their best, and the Fathers who had opened the Chapel of Saint-Antoine were especially to be relied upon. Success was certain. It was merely necessary that Monsieur Lacrisse should not expressly and in so many words announce himself as a Royalist, in order to spare the feelings of the small shopkeepers, who feared a change of regime, particularly during the Exhibition.

Lacrisse objected to this. He was a Royalist and did not intend to put his colours in his pocket. Monsieur Bonnaud stuck to his point. He knew the elector. He knew what sort of animal he was, and how to manage him. If Monsieur Lacrisse would come forward as a Nationalist he, Bonnaud, would win the election for him. Otherwise the thing was impossible.

Joseph Lacrisse was puzzled, and wondered whether he should write to the King about the mat-

ter. But time pressed, and, besides, how could Philippe at such a distance be a competent judge of his own interests? Lacrisse consulted his friends.

"Our strength lies in our principles," replied Henri Léon. "A Monarchist cannot call himself a Republican, even during the Exhibition. But they are not asking you to call yourself a Republican. They do not even ask you to call yourself a Republican Progressive, or a Republican Liberal, which is quite another thing than a Republican. They are asking you to call yourself a Nationalist. You can do that in all honesty, for you are a Nationalist. Don't hesitate. Success depends upon it, and it is of importance to the good cause that you should be elected."

Joseph Lacrisse gave in out of patriotism, writing to the Prince to explain the situation and to assure him of his devotion.

The terms of the programme were drawn up without difficulty. The National Army was to be defended against a mob of maniacs. Cosmopolitanism was to be combated. Paternal rights, jeopardized by the Government's proposal in respect of the Universities, were to be upheld. The peril of Collectivism was to be averted. A tramway was to connect the Grandes-Écuries with the Exhibition. The banner of France was to be held high, and the water supply improved.

There was no question of a plebiscite; people did not know what it was in the Grandes-Écuries ward. Joseph Lacrisse had not the trouble of reconciling his doctrine, which was that of Divine Right, with the doctrine of the Sovereignty of the People. Though he admired and loved Déroulède, he did not blindly follow him.

"I will have tricolour posters," he said to Monsieur Bonnaud. "It will look well, and we must neglect nothing that will take the people's fancy."

Bonnaud approved of this; but Raimondin, the retiring councillor, having managed to secure, at the last moment, the establishment of a steam-tramway from the Grandes-Écuries to the Trocadero, was publishing broadcast the news of his success. He, too, praised the Army in his circulars, and spoke of the wonders of the Exhibition as the triumph of the industrial and commercial genius of France and the glory of Paris. He was becoming a formidable rival.

Feeling that the struggle would be a hard one, the Nationalists did everything in their power to stimulate the courage of their adherents. They accused Raimondin, at innumerable meetings, of having allowed his old mother to die of starvation and of having voted that the municipality should subscribe for Urbain Gohier's book.

Every night they attacked Raimondin, the candidate of the Jews and Panamists. A group of Re-

publican Progressives was formed to support Joseph Lacrisse, and published the following manifesto:

To the Electors

"GENTLEMEN,

"The critical circumstances through which we are now passing make it our duty to ask of the candidates at the forthcoming municipal elections a statement of their opinion as to the general policy, on which the future of the country depends. At an hour when some deluded persons entertain the criminal hope of stirring up an unseemly agitation calculated to weaken our beloved country, at an hour when Collectivism, audaciously installed in power, threatens our property, the sacred fruit of our thrift and labour; at an hour when a Government established against public opinion is preparing tyrannical laws, you will all vote for

"M. JOSEPH LACRISSE,

"Advocate in the Court of Appeal,

"Candidate for the Liberty of Conscience of an honest Republic."

The Nationalist Socialists of the ward had thought at first of choosing their own candidates, whose votes, at the second scrutiny, would have gone to Lacrisse, but the danger was so imminent as to necessitate union. So the Nationalist Socialists of the Grandes-Écuries rallied round Lacrisse, and made the following appeal to the electors:

"CITIZENS,

"We commend to you the definitely Republican, Socialist and Nationalist candidate,

"CITIZEN LACRISSE.

"Down with the traitors! Down with the Dreyfusards! Down with the Panamists! Down with the Jews! Long live the National-Socialist Republic!"

The Fathers, who possessed a chapel and an enormous amount of house-property in the ward, strictly refrained from meddling in electoral affairs. They were too obedient to the Sovereign Pontiff to infringe his orders, and absorption in the works of piety kept them far removed from mundane affairs. But some of their lay friends composed a circular which exactly expressed the thoughts of the worthy Fathers. Here is the text of this circular, which was distributed throughout the ward:

"The Charity of ST. ANTHONY, for the restoration of lost property, jewels, valuables and objects of every description, such as land, houses, furniture, money, feelings, affections, etc., etc.

"GENTLEMEN,

"It is chiefly during elections that the devil attempts to trouble our consciences. And to attain this object he has recourse to innumerable devices. Alas, has he not in his service the whole army of the Freemasons? But you will know how to defeat the

wiles of the enemy. You will reject with horror and disgust the candidate of the incendiaries, the burners of churches and other Dreyfusards.

"It is only by placing righteous men in power that you will put an end to the abominable persecution which is so cruelly being undertaken at the present moment, and will prevent an iniquitous Government from laying its hands upon the money of the poor. Vote for

"M. JOSEPH LACRISSE,
"Advocate in the Court of Appeal,
"St. Anthony's Candidate.

"Gentlemen, do not grieve the good St. Anthony by inflicting upon him the unmerited grief of seeing his candidate defeated.

"Signed: Ribagou, advocate; Wertheimer, publicist; Florimond, architect; Bèche, retired captain; Molon, artisan."

These documents will suffice to show to what intellectual and moral heights Nationalism elevated the discussion of the candidates for the Municipal Council of Paris.

CHAPTER XXIII

OSEPH LACRISSE, the Nationalist candidate, was carrying on an active campaign in the Grandes-Écuries ward against the outgoing councillor, Anselme Raimondin. From the first he felt at his ease in the public meetings at which he spoke. Being a lawyer and very ignorant, he spoke profusely, and nothing ever stopped him. The rapidity of his delivery astonished the electors, with whom he was in sympathy because of the scarcity and simplicity of his ideas, and what he said was always what they would have said themselves, or at least would have tried to say. He was always speaking of his honesty, and of the honesty of his political friends; he insisted that they must elect honest men, and that his party was the party of honest men. As it was a new party, the people believed him.

Anselme Raimondin, at his meetings, replied that he himself was honest, extremely honest, but his protestations, coming after the others, seemed tedious. Since he had already been a councillor and had

experience of municipal affairs, the electors did not find it easy to believe in his honesty, whereas Joseph Lacrisse was dazzling in his innocence.

Lacrisse was young, brisk, and had a soldierly appearance. Raimondin was short and stout, and wore spectacles. This difference was remarked upon at a moment when Nationalism had breathed into municipal elections some of the enthusiasm and poetry which are inseparable from it, together with an ideal of beauty perceptible to the small shopkeeper.

Joseph Lacrisse was totally ignorant of all questions concerning civic affairs, even to the attributions of municipal councils. This ignorance was useful to him. His eloquence was thereby the freer and more stirring. Anselme Raimondin, on the contrary, lost himself in the mazes of detail. He was accustomed to the use of business expressions, and to technical discussions; he had a love of figures, and a passion for documents, and although he knew his public he laboured under certain illusions with regard to the intelligence of the electors who had nominated him. He had a certain amount of respect for them; he dared not lie too grossly, and did his best to enter into explanations. All this made him appear cold, obscure and tedious.

He was no simpleton. He knew where lay his interests, and he understood minor politics. For

two years his district had been submerged by Nationalist newspapers, posters and pamphlets; and he told himself that when the moment came he, too, could pretend to be a Nationalist, that it wasn't so difficult to demolish traitors and acclaim the National Army. He had not feared his enemies sufficiently, thinking that he could always do as they did, in which he was mistaken. Joseph Lacrisse had an inimitable genius for expressing the Nationalist ideal. He had hit upon one special sentence which he frequently employed, and which always seemed new and beautiful. It was this: "Citizens, let us all rise to defend our admirable Army against a handful of cosmopolitans who have sworn to destroy it." This was just the thing to say to the electors of the Grandes-Écuries. Repeated nightly, the sentence aroused the whole meeting to great and formidable enthusiasm. Anselme Raimondin did not hit upon anything nearly so good; if patriotic phrases occurred to him he did not deliver them in the right tone, and they produced no effect.

Lacrisse covered the walls with tricolour posters. Anselme Raimondin also made use of tricolour posters, but either the colours were too washy or the sun faded them; at all events, his posters had a pallid appearance. Everything played him false, every one abandoned him. He lost his assurance; he humbled himself, showed himself prudent and

humble. He shrank from notice; he became almost imperceptible.

Again, when he stood up to speak in the dancing-hall of some third-rate drinking-house he seemed like a pale phantom from which proceeded a feeble voice drowned by pipe-smoke and the interruptions of the audience. He recalled his past. He had always been a fighter, he said. He stood up for the Republic; this remark, like the preceding one, caused no sensation, had no sonorous echo. The electors of the Grandes-Écuries ward wanted the Republic to be defended by Joseph Lacrisse, who had conspired against her. That was what they wanted.

The meeting did not discuss both sides of the question. Only once was Raimondin invited to put in an appearance at a Nationalist meeting. He went; but he was not allowed to speak; and was utterly crushed by a resolution put and carried amid darkness and disorder, for the landlord had cut off the gas as soon as the people started breaking up the benches. The meetings in the Grandes-Écuries ward, as in all the other wards of Paris, were only moderately rowdy. The people now and then displayed the languid violence peculiar to their day, which is the most noticeable characteristic of our political manners. The Nationalists, according to their habit, hurled forth the same monotonous insults in which the expressions "Spy," "Traitor" and

"Rogue" had a feeble, exhausted sound. Their slogans told of an extreme physical and moral enervation, a vague discontent combined with profound lethargy, and a definite inability to think out the simplest problems. There were many insults and few blows. It was unusual if more than two or three per night were wounded or knocked about, counting both parties. Lacrisse's wounded were taken to the Nationalist chemist Delapierre, next door to the riding-school, and Raimondin's to the Radical chemist Job, opposite the market-place, and by midnight there was not a soul left in the streets.

On Sunday, May the 6th, at six o'clock, Joseph Lacrisse, accompanied by his friends, was awaiting the result of the ballot in an empty shop decorated with flags and placards. This was their chief Committee Room. The pork-butcher, Monsieur Bonnaud, arrived, and announced that Lacrisse was elected by two thousand three hundred and nine votes against one thousand five hundred and fourteen for Monsieur Raimondin.

"Citizen," said Bonnaud, "we are much gratified. It is a victory for the Republic."

"And for honest men," replied Lacrisse, adding with dignified benevolence: "I thank you, Monsieur Bonnaud, and I beg you to thank in my name our valiant friends." Then, turning to Henri Léon

who stood beside him, he whispered, "Léon, do me a favour, will you? Wire our success at once to Monseigneur."

Shouts were heard from the street.

"Long live Déroulède! Long live the Army! Long live the Republic! Down with the Jews!"

Lacrisse entered his carriage amid the cheers of the crowd that barred his passage. Baron Golsberg the Jew, was standing at the carriage door; he seized the new councillor's hand:

"I gave you my vote, Monsieur Lacrisse. You understand, I gave you my vote, because, I tell you, anti-Semitism is mere humbug—you know it as well as I do—mere humbug, while Socialism is a serious matter."

"Yes, yes. Good-bye, Monsieur Golsberg."

But the Baron still held on.

"Socialism is the danger. Monsieur Raimondin favoured concessions to the Collectivists. That's why I voted for you, Monsieur Lacrisse."

And still the crowd yelled:

"Hurrah for Déroulède! Hurrah for the Army! Down with the Dreyfusards! Down with Raimondin! Death to the Jews!"

The coachman succeeded in making a way through the mass of electors.

Joseph Lacrisse found Madame de Bonmont at

home, alone. She was excited and triumphant, having already heard the news.

"Elected!" she cried, her arms extended and her gaze directed heavenward.

And the word "elected" on the lips of so pious a lady seemed full of mystical meaning.

She put her beautiful arms around him and drew him to her.

"What makes me happiest is that you owe your election to me."

She had contributed nothing to his expenses. It is true that money had not been wanting, and Joseph Lacrisse had drawn upon more than one banking account; but the gentle Elisabeth had given nothing, and Joseph Lacrisse could not understand what she meant. She explained herself:

"I had a candle burnt every day before St. Anthony; that is why you got in. St. Anthony grants all requests. Father Adéodat told me so, and I have proved it several times."

She covered his face with kisses, and a beautiful idea occurred to her, which reminded her of the customs of chivalry.

"My dear," she asked him, "do not municipal councillors wear a scarf? an embroidered scarf, isn't it? I'll embroider one for you."

He was very tired and fell exhausted into a chair, but kneeling at his feet she murmured:

"I love you."

And only the darkness heard the rest.

. . . . . .

The same evening, in his modest apartments—the apartments of "a child of the quarter," as he called them—Anselme Raimondin heard the result of the election. There were some dozen bottles of wine and a cold *pâté* on the dining-room table. His failure amazed him.

"It was only what I expected," he said.

And he swung round in a pirouette, but he was clumsy and twisted his ankle.

"It's your own fault," said Dr. Maufle, by way of consolation. The Doctor was president of his Committee, an old Radical, with the face of a Silenus. "You allowed the Nationalists to poison the whole ward; you hadn't the pluck to stand up against them. You made no attempt to unmask their falsehoods. On the contrary, like them, with them, you told every lie you could think of. You knew the truth, and you dared not undeceive the electors while there was still time. You've funked it, and you are beaten, and it serves you right!"

Anselme Raimondin shrugged his shoulders.

"You are a silly old fool, Maufle. You don't understand the ins and outs of this election. Yet it's clear enough. My failure was due to one thing only: the discontent of the small shopkeepers who

are being crushed out of existence between the big shops and the co-operative societies. They are suffering and they made me pay for it. That's all."

Then, with a faint smile, he added:

"They'll find themselves nicely taken in."

CHAPTER XXIV

MEETING his pupils Goubin and Denis, on one of the paths of the Luxembourg garden, Monsieur Bergeret said:

"I have good news for you, gentlemen. The peace of Europe will not be disturbed. The Trublions themselves have assured me of it."

And Monsieur Bergeret went on to relate the following story:

"I met Jean Coq, Jean Mouton, Jean Laiglon and Gilles Singe at the Exhibition, where they were listening to the creaking of the footbridges. Jean Coq came up to me, and said sternly: 'Monsieur Bergeret, you said that we wanted war, and that we should make war, that Jean Mouton and I were going to land at Dover with an army and occupy London, and that then I should take Berlin and various other capitals. You said this, I know. You said it with malicious intent to harm us and make the French nation believe that we desire war. Understand, monsieur, that this is a lie. Our tendencies are not war-like; they are military, which is quite

another thing. We desire peace, and when we have established the Imperial Republic in France we shall not go to war.'

"I told Jean Coq that I was quite ready to believe him, and, what was more, that I saw that I had been mistaken and that my mistake was obvious; that Jean Coq, Jean Mouton, Jean Laiglon and Gilles Singe had sufficiently proved their love of peace by refusing to go and fight in China, whither they had been invited by beautiful white placards. 'From that time forth,' said I, 'I realized the truly civil nature of your military sentiments, and the strength of your love for your country. You could not leave the soil of France. I beg you to accept my apologies, Monsieur Coq. I rejoice to see that you are as peacefully disposed as I.'

"Jean Coq looked at me with that eye that causes the world to tremble: 'I am peacefully disposed, Monsieur Bergeret, but, thank God, not as you are. The peace I desire is not your peace. You are slavishly content with the peace that is forced upon us to-day. Our spirit is too great to endure it without impatience. This feeble enervating peace which satisfies you, cruelly wounds the pride of our hearts. When we are the masters we shall make another peace; a terrible, clanking, spurred and booted, equestrian peace! We shall make a pitiless, savage peace, a threatening, horrible, blazing peace; a

peace worthy of us; a peace which, more frightful than the most frightful war, will freeze the world with terror and kill all the English by inhibition. That, Monsieur Bergeret, is our manner of being pacific. In two or three months' time our peace will burst upon the world and will set it in a blaze.'

"After this speech I was forced to admit that the Trublions were peacefully disposed, and thus was confirmed the truth of the oracle written upon an ancient sycamore leaf by the sibyl of Panzoust:

"'Toi qui de vent te repais,
Troublion, ma petite outre,
Si vraiment tu veux la paix,
Commence par nous la f . . .'"

CHAPTER XXV

ADAME DE BONMONT'S *salon* had been unusually lively and brilliant since the victory of the Nationalists in Paris and the election of Joseph Lacrisse for the ward of the Grandes-Écuries. The widow of the great Baron received at her house the flower of the new party. An old Rabbi of the Faubourg St. Antoine believed that the gentle Elisabeth attracted to herself the enemies of the chosen people by a special decree of the God of Israel. The hand, he thought, that placed Esther in the bed of Ahasuerus had been pleased to gather together the chiefs of the anti-Semites and the princes of the Trublions in the house of a Jewess. It is true that the Baronne had renounced the faith of her fathers, but who can fathom the designs of Jehovah! In the eyes of the artists, who, like Frémont, bethought themselves of the mythological figures in the palaces of Germany, her sumptuous beauty, the beauty of a Viennese Erigone, seemed symbolical of the Nationalist vintage.

Her dinners diffused an atmosphere of delight and

power, and the smallest luncheon party at her house had a truly national significance. Thus, this morning she had gathered together at her table the most famous defenders of the Church and Army. There was Henri Léon, Vice-President of the Royalist Committees of the South-West, who had come to congratulate the Nationalists elected in Paris; Captain de Chalmot, the son of General Cartier de Chalmot, with his young American wife, who twittered to such an extent as she expressed her Nationalist propensities that one would have thought the very birds in their cages were taking part in our human disputes; Monsieur Tonnellier, the suspended professor of the fifth form at the Lycée Sully, who, as every one knows, had been convicted of defending, to his young pupils, an assault committed upon the person of the President of the Republic, had been condemned to pay a fine and was forthwith received in the best society, where he behaved very well, except that he was rather given to playing upon words; Frémont, an old Communard and an Inspector of the Fine Arts, who as he grew older became wonderfully reconciled to bourgeois and capitalist society, assiduously frequenting the houses of wealthy Jews, the guardians of the treasures of Christian art, and would gladly have lived under the dictatorship of a horse so long as he could spend the day caressing, with his delicate hands, finely wrought

bibelots of precious material; and the old Comte Davant, dyed, waxed and varnished, handsome still, a trifle morose, who remembered the golden age of the Jews when he supplied the great financiers with furniture by Riesener and bronzes by Thomyres. When acting as the Baron's collector he had gathered together fifteen millions' worth of old furniture and objects of art. To-day, ruined by unfortunate speculation, he lived among the sons, regretting the fathers, a sad, bitter old man, one of the most insolent of parasites, insolence, as he well knew, being a parasite's main passport to favour. She had also invited Jacques de Cadde, one of the promoters of the Henry subscription list; Philippe Dellion, Astolphe de Courtrai, Hugues Chassons des Aigues, President of the Nationalist Committee of Celle-Saint-Cloud, and Jambe-d'Argent in breeches and waistcoat of homespun, the white armlet with the golden lilies on his arm, and a wild shock of hair under his round hat, which, like his chaplet of olive-stones, he never removed. He was a Montmartre singer, by name Dupont, who having become a Chouan was received in the best society. He was taking a snack, with an old flint-gun between his legs, drinking copiously. Since the Affair a new classification had occurred in aristocratic French Society.

Young Baron Ernest sat facing his mother in the

chair set for the master of the house. The conversation turned on politics.

"You are wrong," said Jacques de Cadde to Philippe Dellion. "Believe me, you are wrong not to employ Father François' move. No one knows what may happen after the Exhibition and as soon as we begin to hold public meetings."

"One thing is certain," said Astolphe de Courtrai, "and that is if we want to do well in the elections in twenty months' time we must prepare to begin a campaign. I can promise you that I shall be ready, I'm working hard every day at boxing and single-stick."

"Who's your trainer?" asked Dellion.

"Gaudibert. He has brought French boxing to perfection. It's astonishing. He has some exquisite foot-work, some *coups de savate,* quite of his own. He's a first-class teacher, and understands the tremendous importance of training."

"Training is everything," said Jacques de Cadde.

"Of course," continued Courtrai. "And Gaudibert has superior methods of training, a whole system, based on experience. Massage, friction and dieting followed by plenty of nourishment. His motto is: 'Keep down fat, build up muscle.' And in six months, my friends, he makes you a first-rate boxer, and gives your punch an elasticity and your kick a suppleness——"

Madame de Chalmot inquired:

"Can you overthrow this feeble Ministry?"

And at the bare idea of the Waldeck Cabinet she indignantly shook her pretty head—the head of an infant Samuel.

"Do not distress yourself, madame," said Lacrisse. "This Ministry will be replaced by another just like it."

"Another Ministry of Republican spendthrifts," said Monsieur Tonnellier. "France will be ruined."

"Yes," said Léon, "another Ministry just like this one. But the new Ministry will be less unpopular, for it will no longer be the Ministry of the Affair. We shall need a campaign of at least six weeks with all our newspapers to make it hateful to the people."

"Have you been to the Petit Palais, madame?" said Frémont to the Baronne.

She replied that she had been there and had seen some beautiful caskets and some pretty dance-engagement books.

"Émile Moliner," replied the Inspector of Fine Arts, "has organized an admirable exhibition of French art. The Middle Ages are represented by the most valuable examples. The eighteenth century takes an honourable position too, but there is still space to fill up. You, madame, who possess so

many treasures will not refuse us the loan of some of your masterpieces."

It is true that the great Baron had left his widow many art treasures. For him the Comte Davant had ransacked all the provincial châteaux on the banks of the Somme, Loire and Rhône, and had wrested from ignorant, needy and whiskered gentlemen portraits of ancestors, historic furniture, gifts from kings to their mistresses, imposing souvenirs of the Monarchy, the treasured possessions of the most illustrious families. In her castle at Montil and her house in the Avenue Marceau she had examples of the work of the finest French cabinet-makers and of the greatest wood-carvers of the eighteenth century: chests of drawers, cabinets for medals, secretaries, clocks of all descriptions, candlesticks and exquisite faded tapestries. But although Frémont, and Terremondre before him, had begged her to send some pieces of furniture, bronzes or hangings to the coming Exhibition, she had always refused. Vain of her riches and anxious to display them she had not intended, on this occasion, to lend anything. Joseph Lacrisse encouraged her in this refusal: "Have nothing to do with their Exhibition. Your things will be stolen or burned. And who knows if they will ever succeed in organizing their international fair? It's better to have nothing to do with people like that."

Frémont, who had already been refused on several occasions, persisted:

"You, madame, who possess such beautiful things and are so worthy of possessing them, show yourself to be what you are, liberal, generous and patriotic, for patriotism also is involved in this matter. Send to the Petit Palais your Riesener cabinet decorated with Sèvres in *pâte tendre*. With such a treasure you need fear no rival, for its equal is only to be found in England. We will put upon it your porcelain vases, which belonged to the Grand Dauphin, those two marvellous sea-green vases mounted in bronze by Caffieri. It will be dazzling!"

The Comte Davant interrupted him:

"The mounts," he said in a tone of melancholy wisdom, "are not by Philippe Caffieri. They are marked with a 'C' surmounted by a lily. That is Cressent's mark. You may not know it, but you cannot deny it."

"Madame, display your magnificence! Add to this your tapestry by Leprince, *La Fiancée moscovite*, and you will deserve the gratitude of the whole nation."

She was ready to give way. But before consenting she questioned Lacrisse with a look. He said:

"Lend them your eighteenth-century stuff, as they have none."

Then, out of deference to the Comte Davant, she asked him what she should do. He replied:

"Do as you like. I have no advice to give you. It will be all the same whether you send or do not send your things to the Exhibition. *Rien ne fait rien,* as my old friend Théophile Gautier used to say."

"That's done!" thought Frémont. "I'll go presently and tell the Ministry that I've managed to secure the Bonmont collection. It's well worth the rosette."

And he smiled to himself. He was no fool, but he did not despise social distinctions, and it struck him as piquant that a man who had been imprisoned as a Communard should be made an officer of the Legion of Honour.

"I must go," said Lacrisse. "I've got to prepare the speech for the banquet of the Grandes-Écuries next Sunday."

"Oh," sighed the Baronne, "I shouldn't trouble to do that. It's not necessary, you extemporize so wonderfully."

"Besides, my dear fellow," said Jacques de Cadde, "it's not a difficult matter to address electors."

"Not difficult exactly," said the chosen candidate, "but delicate. Our enemies complain that we have no programme. That is not true, we have a programme, but——"

"Pheasant shooting, that's the programme, messieurs," said Jambe-d'Argent.

"But the elector," continued Joseph Lacrisse, "is of a more complex nature than one would at first suppose. For instance, I've been elected to the Grandes-Écuries by the Monarchists, of course, and by the Bonapartists, and also by the—what shall I call them?—by the Republicans who are sick of the Republic but who still remain Republicans. That is a state of mind not infrequently met with in Paris among the small tradespeople. Thus the pork-butcher who presides over my Committee shouts in my face: 'I've done with the Republic of the Republicans. If I could, I'd blow it up, even if I had to blow up with it; but for your Republic, Monsieur Lacrisse, I would lay down my life for it.' Doubtless there are points on which we all agree. For instance: 'Rally round the flag.' 'No attacks on the Army!' 'Down with the traitors in the pay of the foreigner who work to the undoing of our national defence!' There we are on common ground."

"Then there is also anti-Semitism," said Henri Léon.

"Anti-Semitism," replied Joseph Lacrisse, "is very popular in the Grandes-Écuries because there are so many rich Jews in the ward who are on our side."

"And the anti-masonic campaign!" cried Jacques de Cadde, who was religious.

"All of us in the Grandes-Écuries are agreed to fight the Freemasons," replied Joseph Lacrisse. "The church-goers reproach them for not being Catholics. The Nationalist Socialists reproach them for not being anti-Semites, and all our meetings adjourn to the cry of 'Down with the Freemasons!' to which Citizen Bissolo yells: 'Down with the Cassocks!' Immediately he is knocked on the head, thrown down, trampled upon by our friends and dragged off to the police-station by the police. The spirit of the Grandes-Écuries is excellent, but there are false ideas which we shall have to eliminate. The small shopkeeper does not yet understand that the Monarchy alone will bring him any happiness. He does not yet feel that in bowing to the will of the Church he increases his own stature. The shopkeeper's mind has been poisoned by bad books and bad newspapers. He is against the abuses of the clergy and the intrusion of priests into politics. Many of my electors call themselves anti-clerical."

"Really?" cried Madame de Bonmont, saddened and surprised.

"Madame," said Jacques de Cadde, "it is the same in the provinces. And I call that being against religion. Anti-clericalism spells anti-religion."

"We must not attempt to disguise the fact,"

Lacrisse continued. "We have still a great deal to do. And how? This is what we have to find out."

"As far as I am concerned," said Jacques de Cadde, "I am in favour of violent measures."

"What measures?" asked Henri Léon.

There was a moment's silence, and Henri Léon continued:

"We have had prodigious successes—but so had Boulanger, and he wore himself out."

"He was worn out," said Lacrisse. "But we need not fear that we shall be worn out in the same way. The Republicans, who put up a very good defence against him, are defending themselves very badly against us."

"Besides," said Léon, "it is not our enemies that I fear; it's our friends. We have friends in the Chamber. And what are they doing? They haven't even provided us with a nice little ministerial crisis complicated by a nice little presidential crisis."

"That would have been desirable," said Lacrisse, "but it wasn't possible. If it had been possible Méline would have done it. We must be just. Méline does what he can."

"Then," said Léon, "we must wait patiently until the Republicans of the Senate and the Chamber make way for us. Is that your opinion, Lacrisse?"

"Ah," sighed Jacques de Cadde, "I regret the

days when we cracked one another's heads. Those were the good old days."

"They may return," said Henri Léon.

"Do you think they will?"

"Yes, by Jove, if we bring them back!"

"True!"

"We have numbers on our side, as General Mercier said. Let us act."

"Hurrah for Mercier!" cried Jambe-d'Argent.

"Let us act," repeated Henri Léon. "And let us lose no time about it. And, above all, let us be careful not to allow ourselves to get cold feet. Nationalism must be swallowed hot. As long as it is boiling it's a cordial. Cold, it's a drug."

"What do you mean—a drug?" demanded Lacrisse severely.

"A salutary drug, an efficacious remedy, a good medicine, but one that the patient will not swallow willingly nor with pleasure. We must not let the mixture settle. Shake the bottle before pouring out the dose, according to the precept of the wise chemist. At the present moment our Nationalist mixture, which has been well shaken, is of a beautiful pink colour, pleasant to look upon and of a slightly acid flavour which pleases the palate. If we let the bottle rest, the mixture will lose much of its colour and flavour. A sediment will form. The best will go to the bottom. The monarchical and clerical in-

gredients which enter into its composition will stick to the bottom, and the wily patient will leave three-quarters of it in the bottle. Shake it up, gentlemen, shake it up."

"What did I tell you?" cried young Cadde.

"It is easy to say 'shake it up,' but it must be done at the right time, otherwise you run the risk of upsetting the electors," objected Lacrisse.

"Oh," said Léon, "of course, if you are thinking of your re-election!"

"Who said I was thinking of it? I'm not!"

"You are right, one mustn't meet trouble so much more than half-way."

"What? Trouble? You think my electors will change their minds?"

"On the contrary, I fear they will not. They were discontented and they have elected you. They will be discontented again in four years' time, and then it will be with you. Would you like a word of advice, Lacrisse?"

"Go on."

"You were elected by two thousand votes."

"Two thousand three hundred and nine."

"Two thousand three hundred and nine. You cannot please two thousand three hundred and nine people. But you mustn't think only of the quantity, you must think of the quality too. You have among your electors a fair number of anti-clerical Repub-

licans, small shopkeepers and clerks. They are not the most intelligent."

Lacrisse, who had become an earnest person, replied slowly and thoughtfully:

"I will explain. They are Republicans, but, above all, they are patriots. They voted for a patriot whose ideas did not coincide with theirs, who did not think as they did on matters which they thought of secondary importance. Their conduct is perfectly honourable and I suppose you do not hesitate to approve of it."

"Certainly I approve of it, but, between ourselves, we may confess that they are not particularly bright."

"Not very bright!" replied Lacrisse bitterly. "Not very bright! I will not say that they are as bright as——" He searched his brain for the name of a brilliant man, but either he could not find one among his friends or his ungrateful memory refused the name he sought, or perhaps a natural malevolence caused him to reject each name that came into his mind. He did not finish his sentence, remarking rather crossly, "Anyway, I can't see what's the good of railing at them."

"I'm not railing at them. I only say they are less intelligent than your Monarchist and Catholic electors who worked for you with the good Fathers. Well, your interest as well as your duty is to work

for them, first of all because they think as you do, and also because you don't hoodwink the good Fathers, while one does hoodwink fools."

"That's a mistake, a profound mistake!" cried Joseph Lacrisse. "Anyone can see, my dear fellow, that you don't know the electors. But I know them! Fools are not more easily hoodwinked than others. They delude themselves, it's true, and they delude themselves at every moment; but one doesn't hoodwink them."

"Yes, yes, one does, only one must know how to set about it."

"Don't you believe it!" replied Lacrisse, with sincerity. Then, on second thoughts, "Anyhow, I don't want to hoodwink them."

"Who's asking you to? You must satisfy them. And you can do that easily enough. You don't see enough of Father Adéodat. He's a good adviser, and so moderate! He will tell you, with his shrewd smile, his hands tucked into his sleeves, 'Keep your majority. Content them. We shall not take offence at an occasional vote on the indefeasibility of the rights of man and the citizen, or even against the clergy thrusting themselves into the Government. At public meetings think of your Republican electors, and think of us in the Committees. It is there, in peace and silence, that good work is done. That the greater part of the Council occasionally shows

itself to be anti-clerical is an evil that we can bear with patience. But it is important that the large Committees should be profoundly religious. They will be more powerful than the Council itself; because an active compact minority is always worth more than a lifeless, confused majority."

"That, my dear Lacrisse, is what Father Adéodat will tell you. He is admirably patient and serene. When our friends come and tell him with a shudder: 'Oh, Father, what fresh abominations the Freemasons are preparing! Compulsory University training for office; Article 7; the law relating to associations! Horrible!'—the good Father smiles and says nothing. He says nothing, but this is what he thinks: 'We've been through worse than this. We went through '89 and '93, the suppression of religious communities and the sale of Church property. And does anyone imagine that in former days, under the most Christian Monarchy, we kept or increased our property without effort or struggle? If so, they know very little of French history. Our rich abbeys, our towns and villages, our serfs, our meadows and mills, our woods and our ponds, our justice and our jurisdiction—powerful enemies, lords, bishops and kings were incessantly striving to dispossess us of them. We had to defend by force or before the courts a field or a road one day, the next a castle or a gibbet. To preserve our riches from

the cupidity of secular power we had continually to produce those ancient charters of Clotaire and Dagobert, which the impious knowledge taught in the Government schools to-day calls forgeries. We pleaded for ten centuries against the king's servants. We have only been pleading thirty years against the justice of the Republic. And the people think we are growing weary! No, we are neither frightened nor discouraged. We have money and property. It is the inheritance of the poor. To keep and multiply it we count on two aids that will not fail us: the protection of God and the impotence of Parliament."

"Such are the thoughts which take shape beneath the shining pate of Father Adéodat. Lacrisse, you were Father Adéodat's candidate; you are his chosen one. Go and see him. He is a great politician and will give you good advice. He will teach you how to satisfy the pork-butcher who is a Republican and how to charm the umbrella-maker who is a Freethinker. Go and see Father Adéodat, see him again and again."

"I have spoken with him several times," said Lacrisse. "He is certainly very clever. These good Fathers have grown rich with surprising rapidity. They do a great deal of good in the ward."

"A great deal of good," repeated Henri Léon. "The whole of the enormous quadrilateral between

the Rue des Grandes-Écuries, the riding-school Baron Golsberg's hôtel and the outer boulevard belongs to them. They are working patiently at a gigantic scheme. They have undertaken to erect, in the heart of Paris, in your ward, my dear fellow, another Lourdes, an immense basilica which will draw millions of pilgrims yearly. In the meanwhile they are covering their huge holdings with house-property."

"I know that," said Lacrisse.

"I know it too," put in Frémont. "I know their architect, a man called Florimond, an extraordinary fellow. You know the good Fathers are organizing pilgrimages in France and abroad. Florimond, with his long hair and flowing beard, accompanies the pilgrims on their visits to the cathedrals. He's got the head of a master-mason of the thirteenth century. He gazes at the spires and belfries with ecstatic eyes. He explains arches in tierce-point and Christian symbolism to the ladies. He shows them Mary, the flower of the tree of Jesse, at the heart of the great rose windows. Tearfully, with sighs and prayers, he calculates the resistance of the walls. At the table d'hôte, where monks and pilgrims sit together, his face and hands, still grey with the dust of the old stones which he has embraced, bear witness to the faith of the Catholic artisan. He tells them his dream: 'That I, a humble workman,

may bring my stone to the building of the new sanctuary that will last as long as the world.' Then he goes back to Paris and builds mean houses, tenement houses, with bad mortar and hollow bricks laid on edge, miserable buildings that won't last twenty years."

"But," said Léon, "they are not required to last twenty years. They are the houses of the Grandes-Écuries of which I was speaking just now, and will one day give place to the great basilica of St. Anthony and its dependencies, a whole religious city that will spring up in the next fifteen years. Before fifteen years have elapsed the good Fathers will own the whole quarter of Paris that has elected our friend Lacrisse."

Madame de Bonmont rose, taking the Comte Davant's arm.

"You understand, I don't like parting with my things. Articles loaned run risks. It makes one so anxious. But if it is in the national interest—the country before all. You and Monsieur Frémont will choose what should be exhibited."

"All the same," said Jacques de Cadde, as they left the table, "you are wrong, Dellion, not to try Father François' expedient."

Coffee was served in the small drawing-room.

Jambe-d'Argent, the Chouan singer, sat down at the piano. He had just added to his repertoire a

few Royalist songs dating from the Restoration, which he thought would make a hit in fashionable drawing-rooms. He sang to the tune of *La Sentinelle:*

"Au champ d'honneur frappé d'un coup mortel,
Le preux Bayard, dans l'ardeur qui l'enflamme,
Fier de périr pour le sol paternel,
Avec ivresse exhalait sa grande âme:
Ah! sans regret je puis mourir,
Mon sort, dit-il, sera digne d'envie,
Puisque jusqu'au dernier soupir,
Sans reproche j'ai pu servir
Mon roi, ma belle et ma patrie."

Chassons des Aigues, the President of the Nationalist Committee of Action, went up to Joseph Lacrisse.

"Come now, my dear Councillor, are we really doing anything on the fourteenth of July?"

"The Council," replied Lacrisse gravely, "cannot organize any demonstration of opinion. That is not within its province, but if spontaneous demonstrations occur——"

"Time passes and the danger increases," replied Chassons des Aigues, who was expecting to be expelled from his Club, and against whom a charge of swindling had been lodged with a magistrate. "We must act."

"Don't get excited," said Lacrisse. "We have the men and we have the money."

"We have the money," repeated Chassons des Aigues thoughtfully.

"With men and money one wins elections," continued Lacrisse. "In twenty months we come into power, and we shall remain in power for twenty years."

"Yes, but until then—" sighed Chassons des Aigues, whose pensive eyes gazed anxiously into the vague future.

"Until then," replied Lacrisse, "we shall canvass the provinces. We have begun already."

"It would be better to bring things to a head at once," declared Chassons des Aigues in accents of deep conviction. "We cannot allow this treacherous Government time to disorganize the Army and paralyse the national defence."

"That is obvious," said Jacques de Cadde. "Now, follow my reasoning carefully. Our cry is 'Long live the Army!' "

"Rather!" said young Dellion.

"Let me speak. Our cry is 'Long live the Army!' It is our rallying cry. If the Government begins to replace the Nationalist generals by Republicans, we shall no longer be able to shout 'Long live the Army!' "

"Why?" asked young Dellion.

"Because then we should be shouting *'Vive la Republique!'* That's plain enough."

"There is no fear of that," said Joseph Lacrisse. "The spirit among the officers is excellent. If the Ministry of Treason succeeds in placing one Republican out of ten in the high command, it will be the end of all things."

"That will be unpleasant," said Jacques de Cadde, "for then we shall be forced to cry 'Hurrah for nine-tenths of the Army!' And that's too long for a slogan."

"Be easy!" said Lacrisse. "When we shout 'Hurrah for the Army!' everybody knows that we mean 'Hurrah for Mercier!' "

Jambe-d'Argent, at the piano, sang:

"Vive le Roi! Vive le Roi!
De nos vieux marins c'est l'usage,
Aucun d'eux ne pensait à soi,
Tout en succombant au naufrage,
Chacun criait avec courage:
Vive le Roi!"

"All the same," said Chassons des Aigues, "the fourteenth of July is a good day to begin the row. There will be a crowd in the streets, an electrified crowd, returning from the review, and cheering the regiments as they pass! With method, one could do a great deal on that day, we could stir the inarticulate masses."

"You are wrong," said Henri Léon. "You don't understand the psychology of crowds. The good Nationalist returning from the review has a baby in

his arms, and is dragging another brat by the hand. His wife is with him, carrying wine, bread and ham in a basket. You try to stir up a man with his two kids and his wife carrying the family lunch! And then, don't you see, the masses are inspired by very simple associations of ideas. You won't get them to riot on a holiday. To crowds, the strings of lamps and the Bengal lights suggest cheerful and pacific ideas. They see a square of Chinese lanterns in front of the cafés, and a gallery decked with bunting for the musicians, and all they think about is dancing. If you want to see riots in the streets you must choose the psychological moment."

"I don't understand," said Jacques de Cadde.

"Well, you must try to understand," said Henri Léon.

"Do you think I'm a blockhead?"

"What an idea!"

"You can say it if you think so; you won't annoy me. I don't pretend to be an intellectual. Besides, I've noticed that the clever men fight against our ideas and beliefs, that they want to destroy all that we cherish. So I should be exceedingly sorry to be what is called a clever man. I'd rather be a fool and think what I think and believe what I believe."

"And you are quite right," said Léon. "We have only to remain what we are. And if we are not fools we must behave as if we are. It is folly that succeeds

best in this world. The clever men are the fools. They don't get anywhere."

"What you say is very true," cried Jacques de Cadde.

Jambe-d'Argent sang:

"Vive le Roi! ce cri de ralliement
Des vrais Français est le seul qui soit digne.
Vive le Roi! de chaque régiment
Que ces trois mots soient la seule consigne."

"All the same," said Chassons des Aigues, "you are wrong, Lacrisse, to reject revolutionary measures; they are the best."

"Children!" said Henri Léon. "We have only one means of action, one only, but it is certain, powerful and efficacious. It is the Affair. The Affair gave us birth; we Nationalists must not forget that. We have grown and prospered through the Affair. It alone has fed us and feeds us still. Thence comes our food and our drink; thence we derive the staff of our being. If, uprooted from the soil, it withers and dies, we shall languish and fade out of existence.

"We can pretend to uproot it, but in reality we shall cherish it carefully, nourish it and water it. The public is an ass; moreover, it is disposed in our favour. When it sees us digging and scraping and hoeing round the plant it will think we are doing our best to uproot it completely, and it will love and

bless us for our zeal. It will never dream that we may be lovingly cultivating it. It has flowered anew in the very middle of the Exhibition, and this simple-minded people does not see that it is our care that has achieved this result."

Jambe-d'Argent sang:

"Puisqu'ici notre général
Du plaisir nous donn' le signal,
Mes amis, poussons à la vente;
Si nous voulons bien le r'mercier,
Chantons, soldat, comme officier:
Moi,
Jarnigoi!
Je suis soldat du Roi.
J'm'en pique, j'm'en flatte et j'm'en vante."

"That's a very pretty song," murmured the Baronne, with half-closed eyes.

"Yes," said Jambe-d'Argent, shaking back his rough mane, "it's called *Cadet-Buteux enrégimenté, ou le Soldat du Roi.* It's a little masterpiece. It was a bright idea of mine to unearth some of these old Royalist songs of the Restoration.

"Moi,
Jarnigoi!
Je suis soldat du Roi."

Then, suddenly bringing down his huge hand on the tail-piece of the piano, where he had laid his chaplet and his medals, he exclaimed:

"*Nom de Dieu!* Lacrisse, don't touch my rosary. It has been blessed by our Holy Father the Pope!"

"All the same," said Chassons des Aigues, "we ought to have a manifestation in the streets. The streets are ours, and the people ought to know it. Let's go to Longchamps on the 14th."

"I'm on," said Jacques de Cadde.

"So am I," cried Dellion.

"Your manifestations are idiotic," said the little Baron, who until then had been silent. He was rich enough to refrain from belonging to any political party. "Nationalism is beginning to bore me," he added.

"Ernest!" said the Baronne with the gentle severity of a mother.

"It's true," went on Ernest, "your manifestations bore me to death."

Young Dellion, who owed him money, and Chassons des Aigues, who wanted to borrow some, carefully avoided any direct reply. Chassons tried to smile, as though charmed by his wife, and Dellion half assented.

"I don't deny it, but what doesn't bore one to death?"

This inspired Ernest with profound reflections, and after a moment's silence he said, with a genuine accent of sincerity:

"You are right, everything bores one." And he continued, thoughtfully: "Take motor-cars, for instance. They break down just when you don't

want them to. Not that one minds being late, for all the fun one gets where one is going; but I was hung up five hours the other day between Marville and Boulay. Do you know that part of the country? It is just before you get to Dreux. Not a house, not a tree, not a dip in the ground to be seen; nothing but flat, yellow, open country all round, with a silly-looking sky stuck on top of it all like a bell-glass. One grows old in such localities. Never mind, I'm going to try a different make, seventy kilometres an hour, and runs as smoothly. . . . Will you come with me, Dellion? I'm starting to-night."

CHAPTER XXVI

HE Trublions," said Monsieur Bergeret, "fill me with the keenest interest, so it was not without pleasure that I discovered in the valuable book of Nicole Langelier of Paris a second chapter dealing with these little creatures. Do you remember the first, Monsieur Goubin?"

Monsieur Goubin replied that he knew it by heart.

"I congratulate you," replied Monsieur Bergeret, "for it is a perfect breviary. I will now read you the second chapter, which you will like as well as the first."

And the master read as follows:

"Of the hurly-burly and the great din raised by the Trublions and of a beauteous speech which Robin Honeyman made to them.

"In those days the Trublions made a great din in the town, city and university, each one of them smiting with an iron spoon upon a 'trublio,' that is to say, an iron pot or saucepan, and making a right

tuneful noise. And went about shrieking, 'Death to traitors and godmothers!' They likewise hanged upon the walls and in secret places and privy chambers beauteous little scutcheons bearing such devices as 'Death to the baptized Jews! Buy neither of Jews nor of Lombards! Long life to Tintinnabule!' and armed themselves with firearms and swords, for they were of noble lineage. Nevertheless did they receive Martin Baton into their company, and were such excellent good princes withal that they smote with their fists and disdained not the sports of bondsmen.

"And all their converse was of hewing and splitting in twain, and they said in their language and idiom, which was most meet and congruous and corresponsive to their manner of thinking, that it was their purpose to brain the folk, which is properly to draw forth the brain from the brain-pan wherein it doth lie by the order and disposition of nature. And they did always as they had said, always and whenever there was occasion. And being but simple souls they thought themselves to be virtuous men, and that apart from them there were none righteous, but all evil, which was a marvellously clear ordinance, a perfect distinction and a fair order of battle.

"And they had among them many beauteous and most gracious ladies in sumptuous apparel, the which very graciously and without blandishments and wantonness did incite the aforesaid gallant Trublions to belabour, break asunder, overthrow, transpierce and discomfort all who did not trublion.

"Be not amazed but recognize herein the natural

inclination of fair ladies to cruelty and violence and the admiration of high courage and warlike valour as was seen aforetime in the ancient histories, in which it is related that the god Mars was beloved of Venus and of goddesses and mortals in great store, and that, contrariwise, Apollo, although a blithesome player upon the viol, received naught but the disdain of nymphs and chamber-maids.

"And there was not held in the city any conventicle nor procession of the Trublions, nor feast nor burying, but that a poor man or twain or more was belaboured by them, and left half or three parts dead, yea, wholly dead upon the road, which is a most marvellous thing. For it was the custom that whenever the Trublions passed by they belaboured that man which did refuse to 'trublion,' and afterwards did pitifully bear him upon a bier unto the apothecary, and for this reason or for another were the apothecaries of the city upon the side of the Trublions.

"In these days there was a great fair held at Paris in France, more spacious and greater than were ever the fairs of Aix-la-Chapelle, or Frankfort, or the Lendit, or the great fair of Beaucaire. The said fair of Paris was so copious and abundant in merchandise and works of art and gentle inventions that a worthy man named Cornely, who had seen much and was no homestayer, was wont to say that at the sight, practice and contemplation of the same he did lose the care for his eternal salvation and even the desire for meat and drink. The stranger peoples crowded into the city of the Parisians for

to take their pleasure withal and to spend their gold. Kings and princes came at will, causing both men and women to wag their heads and say, 'This is a great honour.'

"As for the merchants, from the greatest to the least, from All-profit to Earn-little, and the men of trades and industries, they understood right well how to sell much merchandise to the strangers which had come to their city for the fair. Journeymen and beggars unfolded their packs, the keepers of eating-houses and ale-houses set out their tables, and the whole city from end to end was in truth an abundant market-place and a joyous refectory.

"It must also be said that the aforesaid merchants, not all, but the greater number, loved the Trublions, whom they admired for their great power of voice and their many antics; yea, there were none, even unto the Jewish merchants and usurers, who did not look upon them with respect and an exceeding humble desire not to be ill-treated of them.

"Thus did the common people and the merchants love the Trublions, but thereto they naturally loved their merchandise and means of livelihood, and were thereby cast into great fear lest by lusty sallies, sudden breaking forth, kicks, blows, noise and trublionage, they should overturn their stalls and booths throughout all the four quarters, gardens and ramparts of the city, and lest the said Trublions, by furious and speedy slaughter, might affright the stranger peoples and cause them to flee the city with their pouches yet full. Truth to tell this danger was not great. The Trublions did utter the most hor-

rible and terrible threats, also they slew the folk in small numbers, one, two, or three at one time, as has been said, and people of the city: never did they attack Englishmen, nor Germans, nor other peoples, but always their own countrymen. They killed in one place, and the city was great, and there they hardly appeared. And it seemed that their love for these crimes did but increase, and likewise their desire to overthrow yet more. It seemed not meet or seemly that, in this great fair of the world and great brotherhood, the Trublions should appear gnashing their teeth, rolling their fiery eyes, clenching their fists, throwing their legs abroad, yelping like mad dogs with horrible howlings, so that the Parisians were in great fear lest the Trublions should perform at an unseasonable time that which they might perform without let or hindrance after the festival and the trading, to wit, the slaughter here and there of a poor devil or so.

"Then began the citizens to say that they must have peace among themselves, and the public order was given forth that there should be peace throughout the city, to which the Trublions hearkened with but one ear and made reply: 'Yea, but to live without discomforting an enemy or even only a stranger, is that content? If we leave the Jews unbaited we shall not win to Paradise. Are we to fold our arms? God hath said that we must labour that we may live.' And pondering in their minds the universal feeling and common purpose they were greatly perplexed.

"Then did an ancient Trublion, hight Robin

Honeyman, gather together the chiefs of the Trublions, being esteemed, venerated and well-accepted of them, for they knew him to be expert in deception and profuse in cunning ruses and guileful devices. Opening his mouth, which was fashioned like that of some ancient pike-fish the which hath lost some teeth but hath yet teeth enough to bite the little fishes, he said very sweetly:

"'Hearken, friends! Give ear, all! We be honest folk and good fellows, we be not mad. We ask for peace, we desire peace. Peace is sweet, peace is a precious ointment; peace is an electuary of Hippocrates, an Apollonian dittany. It is a fair medicinal infusion, it is flower of the lime, mallow and marshmallow. It is sugar and honey. Honey say I? Am I not Robin Honeyman? I do feed on honey. Let the golden age return and I will e'en lick the honey from the trunks of the ancient oak-trees. I speak sooth. I desire peace; ye desire peace.'

"Hearing such words from Robin Honeyman, then did the Trublions begin to make churlish grimaces and whispered among themselves: 'Is this Robin Honeyman our friend that speaketh in this wise? He loves us no longer, he would deal treacherously with us. He seeketh to do us a hurt; or maybe his wits have gone wool-gathering.' And the most trublioniacal among them said: 'What saith this old wheezer? Doth he think we shall put away our staves, cudgels, hammers, and mallets and the beauteous little fire-sticks in our pockets? What are we in time of peace? Naught. We are worth nothing but by reason of the blows we deal. Would he

have us smite no more? Would he have us trublion no more?' And a great clamour and murmuring arose in the assembly, and the council chamber of the Trublions was an angry sea.

"Then did the good Robin Honeyman spread forth his little yellow hands above the wagging heads, like unto a Neptune calming the tempest, and when he had restored the Trublion ocean to its serene and tranquil estate, or well-nigh so, he spoke most courteously:

" 'I am your friend, my sweetings, and your good counsellor. Hearken what I would say before ye wax angry. When I say we wish for peace it is plain that I speak of the pacification of our enemies, adversaries, and all contentious persons who think, speak and act contrariwise unto us. It is visible and apparent that I mean the pacification of all save ourselves; of the police and magistrates opposed to us. Pacification of the civil officers of the peace invested with the power and office to impeach, restrain, repress and contain Trublionage. Pacification of that justice and law by which we be menaced. We desire that these be plunged into a profound and deadly peace. We desire for all that are not Trublions the gulf and abyss of pacification and deadly repose. *Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine.* This is our desire. We do not demand our own pacification. We are not pacified. When we sing *Requiescat,* is it for ourselves? We do not desire to sleep. When we are dead it is for a long time. *Nos qui vivimus,* we bestow peace on others, not in this world but in the next; this is the more certain. I

desire peace. Am I then a simple fellow? Know ye not Robin Honeyman? My sweetings, I carry more than one trick in my juggler's pocket. My lambkins, are you then less wary than the urchins and schoolboys that sport together, who, playing together, when the one desireth to gain the advantage over the other, straightway he crieth "Pax!" which is truce and suspension of hostilities, and having thus deprived him of all defiance and defence he doth easily defeat him and leave him abashed.

"Thus do I Robin Honeyman, King's Attorney. When as doth often hap I have quiet and cunning enemies in the council chamber, I speak to them in this wise: "Peace, peace, peace, gentlemen! *Pax vobiscum!*" and very softly slip a pot of gunpowder and old nails beneath the bench whereon they sit, with a fair wick of which I hold the end. Then, while I feign a peaceful sleep, I light the wick at a seasonable moment, and if they do not all leap into the air the fault is none of my making. Doubtless the powder was discovered, and I await the next good occasion.

"'My good friends, follow the example and behold a model in your chiefs, masters and rulers. See ye not that Tintinnabule remaineth still and doth not for the present tintinnabulate? He awaits a fit and favourable occasion. Is he then pacified? You do not think so. And the young Trublio, doth he desire peace? Nay, he likewise waiteth. Hearken diligently. It is good, profitable and necessary that you appear to desire a favourable, kind, assuaging and purging pacification. What doth it cost you?

Naught. And you shall derive therefrom great profit. You that are not pacified shall appear pacified, and the other folk (those that do not trublion), who are in truth pacified, shall appear unpacified, corrupted, wayward, furious, wholly opposed and contrary to a gracious peace, so covetable, pleasant and desirable. Thus it shall be made manifest that you have great zeal and love for the public peace and welfare, and also that, on the contrary, your opponents have a malign desire to trouble and destroy the city and all that lies about it. And say not that this is difficult. It will be as you desire and you will make the simple folk believe that you desire peace. They will believe what you tell them, for they hearken unto you. If you say "I desire peace" they will straightway believe that you do truly desire it. Say it then to give them pleasure, for 'twill cost you naught.

" 'Nevertheless, for your enemies and adversaries which at first so piteously bleated "Peace! Peace!" (for they be as gentle as sheep, which cannot be gainsaid) it shall be lawful for you to brain them and to say: "They desired not peace therefore we have overthrown them. We do desire peace and will bring the same to pass when we are your ministers."

" 'It is worthy of all praise pacifically to wage war. Cry "Peace, Peace!" and smite the while. This is Christian-like. "Peace, Peace! This man is dead! Peace, Peace! I have slain three men!" The intention was pacific and you will be judged according to your intention. Go then, cry "Peace!" and smite stoutly. The bells of the

monasteries will ring a merry peal for you that love peace, and the praise of the peaceful citizens will follow you. They seeing your victims with gaping bellies lying upon the highways will say: "That is well done. It is for peace' sake. Long live peace! Without peace no man can live at ease" ' "

CHAPTER XXVII

ADAME DE BONMONT knew the Exhibition well, having dined there on several occasions. That evening she was dining at the "Belle Chocolatière"—a Swiss restaurant situated, as every one knows, on the bank of the Seine—together with the militant élite of Nationalism, Joseph Lacrisse, Henri Léon, Gustave Dellion, Jacques de Cadde, Hugues Chassons des Aigues and Madame de Gromance, who, as Henri Léon remarked, was very like the pretty servant in Liotard's pastel, a greatly enlarged copy of which served as a sign for the restaurant. Madame de Bonmont was gentle and tender-hearted. It was love, relentless love that had placed her among these warriors, and, like the Antigone of Sophocles, she brought among them a soul fashioned not for hatred but for sympathy. She pitied the victims. Jamont seemed to her the most pathetic of these, and the premature retirement of this general moved her to tears. She thought of embroidering a cushion for him, on which he could lay his glorious head. She

loved making such presents, the value of which consisted solely in the feeling that prompted them. Her love, strengthened by admiration, for Municipal Councillor Lacrisse, left her a good deal of leisure, which she employed in weeping over the misfortunes of the Army and in eating sweets. She was fast putting on flesh and was becoming quite an imposing figure.

The thoughts of young Madame de Gromance were of a less generous kind. She had loved and deceived Gustave Dellion, and then she had loved him no longer. But as he removed her light pink-flowered cloak under the respectfully-lowered eyes of the head-waiter on the terrace of the "Belle Chocolatière," Gustave muttered in her ears words that sounded strangely like "jade" and "beastly strumpet." She did not allow the least distress to appear on her face, but inwardly she thought him rather sweet, and felt that she was about to love him again. And Gustave thoughtfully realized that for the first time in his life he had spoken like a lover. He sat down solemnly beside Clotilde.

The dinner, which was the last of the season, was by no means a merry one. The sadness of farewell was felt and a certain Nationalist melancholy. Doubtless they still hoped—what am I saying?—they still cherished infinite hopes, but it is painful, when one has everything, both men and money, to

await the future, the dim, distant future, the realization of long-cherished desires and urgent ambitions. Joseph Lacrisse alone remained calm, thinking that he had done enough for his King in being elected municipal councillor by the Nationalist Republicans of the Grandes-Écuries.

"Taking it altogether," he said, "everything went very well at Longchamps on the 14th. The Army was cheered. There were shouts of 'Hurrah for Jamont! Hurrah for Bougon!' There was a great deal of enthusiasm."

"Doubtless, doubtless," said Henri Léon; "but Loubet returned unmolested to the Élysée, and the day did not forward our affairs overmuch."

Hugues Chassons des Aigues, who had a fresh scar on his nose—which was of the big and royal order—frowned and said proudly:

"I can tell you things were hot at the Cascades. When the Socialists cheered the Republic and the Army——"

"The police," put in Madame de Bonmont, "ought not to allow things to be shouted."

"When the Socialists cheered the Republic and the Army we replied, 'Long live the Army! Death to the Jews!' The 'white carnations,' whom I had hidden in the crowd, rallied to my cry. They charged the 'red eglantines' under a hail of iron chairs. They were magnificent. But it was no good,

the crowd would not respond. The Parisians had come with their wives and children, with baskets and string bags full of food, and the place swarmed with country cousins come to see the Exhibition. Old farmers with stiff legs who looked on with fishy eyes, peasant women in shawls, looking as scared as owls! How could we stir up a family party of that sort?"

"Doubtless," said Lacrisse, "the moment was ill-chosen. Besides, to a certain extent, we have to respect the Exhibition truce."

"All the same," said Chassons des Aigues, "we hit pretty hard at the Cascades. I gave Citizen Bissolo a crack on the head that sent it down into his hump. I saw him fall to the ground; he looked just like a tortoise. Then, 'Hurrah for the Army! Death to the Jews!' "

"Doubtless, doubtless," said Henri Léon gravely. "But 'Hurrah for the Army!' and 'Death to the Jews!' is a trifle subtle for crowds. It is—if I may say so—too literary, too classical, and it is not sufficiently revolutionary. 'Hurrah for the Army!' It is fine, it is noble, it is proper, it is cold—yes, it is cold. Let me tell you, there is only one way to excite a crowd, and that is by panic. Believe me, the only way to get a mob of unarmed people on the run is to put fear into their bellies. You should have run, crying—what shall I say?—'Save your-

selves! Look out! You are betrayed! Frenchmen, you are betrayed!' If you had shouted that or something like it, in a lugubrious voice, running along the lawn, five hundred thousand people would have run along with you, would have run quicker than you, until they dropped. It would have been terrible and magnificent. You would have been knocked down and trampled to death, mashed to a pulp, but you would have started the revolution."

"Do you really think so?" asked Jacques de Cadde.

"I am certain of it," replied Henri Léon. "'Treachery!' that is the true cry of riot, the cry that gives wings to the crowd and sets brave men and cowards alike going at the same pace, fills a hundred thousand hearts with one emotion and restores the use of his legs to the paralytic. Ah, my dear Chassons, if you had shouted at Longchamps 'We are betrayed!' you would have seen your old screech-owl with her basket of hard-boiled eggs and her umbrella and your old fellow with the stiff legs running like hares."

"Running where?" asked Lacrisse.

"I don't know. Who knows where a panic-stricken crowd runs to? They don't know themselves. But what does that matter? They've been set going, and that's enough. You can't cause riots with method. To occupy strategical points was well

enough in the far-off days of Barbès and Blanqui, but to-day, what with the telegraph, telephone or merely the police and their bicycles, any sort of concerted action is out of the question. Can you see Jacques de Cadde occupying the police-station in the Rue de Grenelle, for instance? No. All that is possible nowadays is a vague, immense, tumultuous demonstration. And fear, unanimous, tragical fear alone is capable of carrying away the enormous human masses that frequent public fêtes or open-air shows. You ask me where the crowd of the 14th of July would have run to, spurred on as by a big black flag at the cries of 'Treachery! Treachery! The foreigner! Treachery!' Where would they have run to? Into the lake, I suppose."

"Into the lake," repeated Jacques de Cadde. "Well, they would have been drowned, that's all."

"Well," returned Henri Léon, "would thirty thousand drowned citizens have counted for nothing? Would not the Ministry and the Government have experienced serious difficulty and real danger in the matter? Wouldn't that have been a good day's work? Look here, you are no politicians. You don't care a damn whether you overthrow the Republic or not."

"You'll see that after the Exhibition," said young Cadde with the simplicity of faith. "I myself smashed one of them at Longchamps for a start."

"Ah, you smashed one of them, did you?" asked young Dellion with interest. "What sort of a specimen?"

"A mechanic. It would have been better if he had been a Senator, of course; but in a crowd you are more likely to chance on a workman."

"What was your mechanic doing?" asked Léon.

"He was shouting 'Hurrah for the Army!' so I bashed him."

Thereupon, fired with generous emulation, young Dellion told them that on hearing a Socialist-Dreyfusard shout for Loubet, he had bashed his jaw for him.

"All goes well!" said Jacques de Cadde.

"There are some things that might go better," said Hugues Chassons des Aigues. "Don't let us be too pleased with ourselves. On July the 14th, Loubet, Waldeck, Millerand and André each returned home safe and sound. They would not have returned had my advice been heeded. But no one will act, we are lacking in energy."

Joseph Lacrisse answered gravely:

"No, no, we are not wanting in energy, but for the moment there's nothing to be done. After the Exhibition we shall enter upon a vigorous course of action. It will be a favourable moment. After her fête France will be suffering from a bad head and a bad temper. There will be lock-outs and strikes.

Nothing simpler than to provoke a Ministerial crisis, even a Presidential crisis. Don't you agree with me, Léon?"

"Doubtless, doubtless," replied Henri Léon. "But we must not forget that in three months' time we shall be a little less numerous and Loubet a little less unpopular."

Jacques de Cadde, Chassons des Aigues, Dellion, Lacrisse and all the Trublions tried to drown with their protestations so dismal a prediction, but in a very quiet voice Henri Léon proceeded:

"It is inevitable. Loubet will become less unpopular daily. He was primarily disliked because of the reports that we spread about him, but he will not live up to all of them. He is not great enough to equal the picture we drew of him, to the terror of the crowd. We showed them a Loubet of a hundred cubits' stature, protecting the thieves in Parliament and destroying the Army. The reality will seem much less terrible. They will see that he does not always protect the thieves or disorganize the Army. He will hold reviews. That will produce an impression. He will ride in a carriage. That is more dignified than going on foot. He will bestow crosses and an abundance of academic palms, and those who receive the cross or the palms will refuse to believe that he intends to betray France. He will make tactful speeches; you may be sure of that; tactful

because utterly inane. If he wants to be acclaimed he has only to travel about. The country people will cheer for the President as he passes, just as though he were the kind-hearted tanner whose loss we all deplore because he loved the Army. And if the Russian alliance were pulled off—the bare idea of such a thing makes me shudder—you would see our Nationalist friends unharness his carriage and drag it through the streets. I don't say he's a genius, but he's not a bigger fool than the rest of us, and he is trying to improve his position. That's only natural. We want to overthrow him and he is wearing us out."

"I defy him to wear us out," cried young Cadde.

"Time alone will suffice to wear us out," replied Henri Léon. "How fine our Municipal Council was on the evening of the poll that gave us the majority! 'Hurrah for the Army! Death to the Jews!' yelled the electors, drunk with joy, pride and love. And the successful candidates, beaming, replied, 'Death to the Jews! Hurrah for the Army!' But as the new Council can neither free the sons of the electors from military service nor distribute the money of the rich Jews among the small shopkeepers nor even spare the working-man the horrors of slack times, it will betray vast hopes and become as odious as it was once desirable. It will shortly run the risk of becom-

ing unpopular over questions of monopoly, gas, water and omnibuses."

"You are wrong, my dear Léon," cried Joseph Lacrisse. "There is nothing to fear with regard to the renewal of monopolies. We say to the electors, 'We are giving you cheap gas,' and the electors will not complain. The Municipal Council of Paris, elected on an exclusively political programme, will exercise a decisive influence on the political and national crises that will follow immediately after the closing of the Exhibition."

"Yes, but in order to do that," said Chassons des Aigues, "it will have to place itself at the head of the revolutionary movement. If it is moderate, prudent, conciliatory, considerate, all is lost. The Council must realize that it has been elected to overthrow and smash Parliamentarianism."

"Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet!" cried Jacques de Cadde.

"Little must be said, but that little to the point," continued Chassons des Aigues.

"Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet!"

Chassons des Aigues disdained the interruption.

"A pledge, a simple pledge should be expressed from time to time. Such as: 'Impeachment of the Ministers——' "

"Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet!" cried young Cadde louder than ever.

Chassons des Aigues tried to make him listen to reason.

"I am not opposed on principle to our friends sounding the *hallali* of the parliamentarians, but in public gatherings the trumpet is the supreme argument of the minority. We must keep it for the Luxembourg and Palais Bourbon. I should like to point out, my dear fellow, that at the Hôtel de Ville we are in the majority."

This consideration did not move young Cadde, who continued to vociferate:

"Blow the trumpet! Blow the trumpet! Do you know how to blow the trumpet, Lacrisse? If you don't, I'll teach you; it is quite essential for a municipal councillor to know how to blow the trumpet."

"To resume," said Chassons des Aigues, as solemn as a judge, "the first pledge of the Council should be the impeachment of the Ministers; the second, the impeachment of the Senators; and the third, the impeachment of the President of the Republic. After a few resolutions of this description the Ministry will proceed to the dissolution of the Council. The Council resists, and makes a vehement appeal to public opinion. Outraged Paris rises——"

"Do you think so?" asked Henri Léon quietly. "Do you really think, Chassons, that outraged Paris will rise?"

"I do think so," replied Chassons des Aigues.

"I do not think so," said Henri Léon. "You know Citizen Bissolo—since it was you who nearly brained him on the fourteenth of July at the review—I know him too. One night, on the boulevard, during a demonstration following the election of the deplorable Loubet, Citizen Bissolo came to me as the most constant and most generous of his enemies. We exchanged a few words. All our paid roughs were shouting at the top of their voices. Shouts of 'Hurrah for the Army!' resounded from the Bastille to the Madeleine. Smiling and amused, the passers-by were on our side. Bissolo stretched out his long hunchback's arm like a scythe in the direction of the crowd and remarked: 'I know the jade. Mount her, and she'll break your back by suddenly lying down when you aren't expecting it.' Those were the words of Citizen Bissolo as we stood at the corner of the Rue Drouot on the day when Paris offered herself to us."

"But this Bissolo of yours is a rogue," cried Joseph Lacrisse. "He insults the people."

"He is a prophet," replied Henri Léon.

Young Jacques de Cadde chanted, in his thick voice:

"Blow the trumpet! It's the only way!"

THE END.

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